HUNGARIAN TALES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE LETTRE DE CACHET.

ne nation fiere et genereuse, l'appui de ses souverains—le fleau de ses tyrans.—VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CASSIAN.

CHAPTER XVII.

> Oh! who would be a woman? who that fool
> A weeping, pining, faithful, loving woman?
> She hath hard measures still where she hopes kindest,
> And all her bounties only make ingrates.
>
> *Kenilworth*

THE zeal with which the bidding of the Countess Lingotski was obeyed, even in furtherance of her perilous enterprize, and not by Szava the Sclavonian alone, but by numerous members of the household whose suspicions must naturally have been roused by her preparations and movements, was a sufficient evidence that the good seed of her just ministry, and useful activity among her vassals, had not fallen upon ungrateful ground. At noon, the Count and the Chevalier and their

train had sallied forth to the greenwood with hound and horn, and all the stately *apanage* of their pride;—at eve, Iölina alone and unobserved, had passed the drawbridge; leading forth as for a twilight walk the little helpless companion of her loneliness. The greyheaded porter had bid "God save them," as they passed the gate; and the sentinels presented arms as they emerged from the archway. This was the last earthly homage received by Iölina as Countess Lingotski.

At some distance along the avenue, Szava stood watching his impatient steeds; and as Iölina and young Emerich approached, they could distinguish the cheerful predictions and words of consolation which he was pouring into the ears of the sobbing Katalin. Without further delay they ascended the humble vehicle, and the horses which were of the celebrated Szent Miklós breed, and which Szava failed not to extol as the most excellent on the earth's surface, seemed conscious of the value of their burden, and of the necessity for exertion in their favour; and they paused not in their accelerated course, until they had

left the avenue far in the distance, and had attained the last hill from whose summit the castle of Szent Miklós remained visible. Szava, anticipating the commands of the Countess, stopped short to look back upon an object so interesting to every member of the little party; and so doubly endeared to Iölina by that sweetest of woman's epochs, the birth of her first-born and only child. She pressed that child more fondly to her bosom, as she strained her eyes to gaze upon the scene of her trials, of her patience, of her humiliation; and as she wept over the boy that slumbered so sweetly within her arms, she failed not to bless that mighty hand which had still preserved it to be her consolation.

The beacon burning on the watchtower, and the lights glancing from window to window among the offices, revealed the site of the castle, whose lofty outlines were already lost in the darkness of night. The slender windows of the chapel which chanced to be brightly illuminated in honour of a saintly vigil, shone cheeringly through the gloom; and while their graceful

arching was displayed in bold relief by the blaze within, their holy radiance seemed to bid the wanderers speed on, and be comforted. "Farewel, Szent Miklós, and as I trust for ever," exclaimed the Countess. "Thou wert a home too lofty for my humble mind ;—peace and love rest not within sound of the clank of chains, or the harsh grating of the portcullis. Thou wert built to be the stronghold of despots, therefore,—adieu, Szent Miklós!"

Two weary days, two restless nights, agitated the mind of the fugitive Countess with new terrors, ere she finally reposed herself in the humble but secure habitation prepared for her by the kindred of Szava. At present she had little to fear from pursuit, for their circuitous route and careful measures might seem to defy the most active search; and even had the lady of Lingotski visited the little Sclavonian settlement in all the pomp of her pride, she could not have been welcomed with a warmer shew of love and devotion than awaited her among the rude *szeksa* or soda-gatherers of Vanicza. As she installed herself in her retreat, her heart was uplifted in

gratitude unto Him who had made her path secure, and had spread for her a refuge in the wilderness; and she was too deeply impressed with a sense of the difficulties she had overcome, and the contamination from which she had withdrawn herself, to be curiously alive to the hardships of her actual position.

What could she care indeed for the absence of her accustomed luxuries,—her boy was now permitted to disport his little limbs in the sunshine, fearless of being driven back to solitude by reproach or cruelty!—herself could sit in the silence of her peaceful chamber, without dread of encountering the practised scheming of a libertine whose presumption,—and it was a horrible surmise,—she could not but believe to have been sanctioned or unheeded by her husband. The tumult, too, of her recent alarms had not sufficiently subsided to admit of her seeking terrors in futurity;—as the waves of a troubled ocean uplift their heads to shut out the prospect which is extended by the glassy surface of a calm;—while the little Emerich, whose eyes had never before rested on other than the familiar

objects of the home of his infancy, was delighted by those very deficiencies which the Sclavonian kindred of Szava deplored with so much humility. White bread,—to them an unaccustomed luxury,—was deliciously replaced in the estimation of their guests, by the *maté* or cake of Indian corn, the ordinary fare of the village; nor could the rich vintages of the Tokayër or Erlauer have rivalled their purer mead, the product of the Transylvanian apiaries. The forests of Szent Miklós, its stately avenues, and gorgeous hussars, were no longer, it is true, at the disposition of the little magnat; but it was poor Katalin alone who deplored their loss, or lamented to see her honoured charge thus shorn of his beams;—for to *his* childish eye, the melon fields around Vanicza, basking in the sun,—the *szeksa*-gatherers with their brooms and wild Sclavonian attire, presented the far dearer charm of novelty.

The village or settlement, which now afforded so welcome a retreat to the Countess and her son, was situated in one of those cheerless Hungarian districts so valuable by the production of *natron*,

or mineral alkali. A vast flat, or sandy wild, extended itself in every direction as far as the weary eye could reach; on the surface of which, on patches partaking of the character of a morass, the natron or soda is deposited. The vegetation of these favoured spots consists of heath, or scrubby grass, which becomes encrusted with the white and powdery alkali; and the *szeksa*, having been carefully brushed into heaps by the peasantry, who gain their sole livelihood by the occupation, is collected into larger proportions for the soap manufactories of Debreczin and Herrmannstadt. In some parts of the plain, the oozing of numerous springs impregnated with the same alkaline matter, forms occasional lakes; whose shallow waters evaporate in the summer heats, and leave a still more copious deposit of natron upon the coarse parched herbage. Within the limits also of this mineralized region, a powerful saline spring offers its less precious, but more serviceable product to the use of the *szeksa sweepers;* who apply it to domestic purposes in the simplest and rudest manner,

by pouring the waters over wood fires for evaporation.

But if nature has been liberal of the gifts of her mineral kingdom to this singular spot, she has balanced her generous profusion by withholding every other treasure of her mighty empire. No trees, save here and there a stunted sallow,—which appears to verify the Scriptural record of "a pillar of salt,"—will flourish in the pungent atmosphere, whose alkaline secretions sickly o'er the languid herbage with the pale cast of disease;—the vegetable kingdom appears oppressed and withered by the prevalence of a mightier agency; and coarse rude reeds alone, resisting the bitter waters from which they spring, rattle their tall and brittle stems in the summer wind, and afford fuel to the cultivators of the arid soil. Thus a tedious sameness pervades the expanded landscape, and a scorching reflection gives back the unavailing rays of the fierce sunshine; and Iölina, as she gazed from the contracted windows of the cabin, on whose white walls the ordinary Hungarian exhortation, "*Ora*

et labora," was ineffaceably inscribed upon the white walls of the cabin; and Iölina in gazing upon the featureless desart around, confessed that it afforded a prospect as uninviting and cheerless as the path of her own peculiar existence;—labour and prayer were indeed its only promise of occupation. But she was careful to qualify her notice of the novel scene in deference to the prejudices of her kind hosts who, attached to the barren soil from sire to son, looked with pity or contempt upon the pastures of a greener earth;—upon the chilly lakes of the Carpathian wilds,—or the verdant depths of the Transylvanian forests. They even shuddered when Szava, their travelled kinsman, described the shadowy coolness of the woods, or the glassy expanse of the Platen See;—so wisely hath Providence attempered our perceptions to the area in which they are destined to expand.

The observations of the young Count, if less guarded than those of his gentle mother, were equally secure from the chance of wounding the feelings of his Sclavonian protectors; for they were not only breathed in the Hungarian or

Italian tongue, but were genuinely expressive of delight and approbation of the novelties by which he was surrounded. He was captivated, too, by the melody of the unknown dialect which was in use in the little settlement; and which, even in the centre of a Hungarian population, is carefully maintained by the Sclavonians; for neither Imperial edicts nor political expediency can obliterate the traces of a language still spoken by thirty millions of Europeans. It became one of the tasks of his brief and joyous day, to catch from Szava or Katalin, the bird-like accents that mocked his curiosity; while the Countess, in order to divert the busy thoughts which preyed upon her mind, occupied her idleness right earnestly, with a distaff that sometimes replaced the field-labours of Szava's mother, whose garnished chamber of state had been given up for her use; and with Emerich at her feet, questioning her amid his playful endearments, of the various countries she had visited, and of the friends who had made them interesting in her eyes,—and with the faithful Katalin to soothe her hours of

occasional depression, the Countess Lingotski grieved not for hall or bower of statelier seeming, nor would have exchanged her destiny for one of the proudest elevation.

But while the smiles of the child she loved sufficed to embellish and enlighten her dark abiding place, and to blind her to the probability that some future discovery of her retreat might enable its cruel and irritated father to wrest it from her bosom, they did not prevent her from sometimes indulging in painful and needless retrospections. She could not forbear,—meekly, and unrepiningly indeed, but still with sensitive consciousness,—from reverting to the evil destiny which, from her childhood forwards, had appeared to haunt her footsteps. Her heart—could there have existed one more gently framed to find its happiness in the simple charities of love and kindliness?—her mind—could there have been one more humbly prompt to confess its own inefficiency, and to rely for guidance upon the revealed instructions of its mighty Source of being?—her conduct—could any tenour of exist-

ence have marked more clearly the advantage of such pure and conscientious governance? And yet her affections had been cast away with scorn,—her motives misconstrued and slandered,—and her whole heart and soul and being, blighted by the pressure of undeserved misfortune. As she pondered over these things, the tears would spring up so bitterly in her eyes, and her spindle turn with such restless, yet unconscious activity, that her humble household who saw in labour and exertion only the hard necessity of poverty, took courage to pray her to forbear, and lay her work aside; promising that their own toils should be redoubled to complete her task. "Peace! misjudging churls," Katalin would reply, "'tis the restlessness of an uneasy heart which urges the restless hand; such unnatural efforts betray the secret strife of an unquiet mind. Molest her not,—good friends,—let her excited frame expend its irritation in this pangless activity."

Sometimes, indeed, her reflections were of a yet more perplexing character. Her present means of maintenance must finally fail,—perhaps her

present strength,—and how could she bear to burden her faithful friends and adherents? Lingotski too,—she had irritated him far beyond his patience, by the open defiance and avowed detestation betrayed in her flight from his habitation, and in her indefensible removal of his heir; how heavily might he not inflict upon her head, the chastisement of her presumptuous opposition to his imperious will? Sidonia,—her beloved Sidonia,—was in a foreign land; occupied with her own prospects of renewed happiness, and perhaps sharing once more the enmity of her offended brother. One only friend remained, on whose protection to rely for aid and mercy;—*Cassian!* —where was Cassian Zeriny,—her kinsman,—the brother, the lover of her youth?—

She had long since learned from Nadasch, who entertained some literary correspondence with the literati of the capital, that the Baron Zeriny had returned to fix himself in his native city,—in his domestic but lonely home;—graver in aspect, nobler in demeanour, and enlightened, refined, and strengthened in character, by the experience

of years and much travel. He had assumed that place in the society of Pesth, or rather it had been willingly conceded to his liberal exertions for the public good, which the absence and indifference of the leading magnats of the kingdom had left uncared for; and his splendid fortune had been withdrawn from the narrow sources in which his father had restrained its means of usefulness, to further such enterprises, and assist such endeavours for the aggrandizement and amelioration of his native country, as his own wisdom and prudence could sanction. Under his generous auspices, native manufactures had been improved and circulated,—public hospitals had been endowed,—massive quays had presented their stony barrier to the Danube,—public baths had concentrated and dispensed its healthful waters, and splendid fountains diffused a yet purer stream through the thirsty city. Men of science and wisdom had been allured from other countries, to preside over the institutions for education, and for the advancement of national literature; and a noble museum already attracted the admiration of

the intelligent traveller, to the rich resources of the Hungarian kingdom.

It was generally believed that Baron Zeriny, the profuse but unobtrusive patron of native talent, and the silent instigator of these admirable undertakings, sought in such exertions of public beneficence oblivion for past sorrow, and a resource against the loneliness of a vacant heart; and the worthy Nadasch, in communicating to the Countess Lingotski, in the course of her solitary sojourn at Szent Miklós, these interesting tidings respecting her kinsman, little imagined how largely her precepts and her loss had contributed to form the character, and sadden the mind of the Hungarian patriot. But could she address him for succour and protection, —dared she draw his attention to her desolate condition,—might she intrust to his ear the story of her wrongs, and of that severity which he had been the unconscious means of bringing down upon her head?—She could not—dared not—might not! Prudence and delicacy equally sealed her lips, and elevated an impassable barrier between herself and her only surviving friend.

Meanwhile, the persuasion entertained by Iölina that her abode could not long remain undetected by the numerous and zealous emissaries of the Count, proved itself a reasonable apprehension. His rage had known no bounds on the first discovery of her escape from Szent Miklós; and the artful suggestions of the malicious Courval, who failed not to point out the publicity which would be thrown upon their misintelligence by the rashness of the measure, served still further to inflame his feelings of resentment; and a scheme of vengeance was concocted between them, such as they judged worthy of the offender and of the offence.

"To seek and find her," observed Lingotski, "were but the work of a day; but 'twere a day ill spent; since I could but drag her back to Szent Miklós, and imprison her with the urchin so cherished of her apish fondness. No! I will take patience, and secure the fair truant a more fitting doom. What! did I stoop to take this rag of plebeian homeliness, this offset of an upstart tree into my bosom, to be thus rewarded?

She came to my heart, with her own polluted by love for another,—she brought me the bitter ashes of a former passion,—and even amid her hypocritical caresses, she preferred the grovelling mechanic Zeriny, unto the high-minded descendant of a race of heroes. Yet I forgave her, Courval;—my generous heart forgave her; and deceived by Sidonia's sophistry and Howard's high-sounding maxims of morality, I returned unto the wife who had thus injured me,—unto the home she had embittered. Nay! more,—I care not now to hide it from thee, for thou shalt witness the heavy measure of my wrath,—I could have loved her still,—still reverenced her;—and guided by her prepossessions, could have forgiven the frailty of the misshapen cub which galls mine ear with the name of father. But she threw me off with cold repulsion; and lest the world should doubt my folly and her triumph, she steals by night from my dwelling, robs me of the halt heir of my fortunes, whose ugliness must perpetuate the memory of our detested union,—herds with him in a Sclavonian hovel, and com-

panions my son with slaves and miscreants! But I cast her from me, Courval; like a foul leper, I cast her for ever from my bosom."

"In as far, I conclude, as the law will sanction your resolution. Our holy mother church,—laud we her providence, —hath balanced her consolatory rejection of eternity of punishment, by confirming the indissolubility of the marriage vow,—*le sacrement de trop.* However, you can revenge yourself by shackling your fair dame with the whole weight of the fetters you are unable to rend asunder, or unrivet; while *you*, as free as air, as gay as youth and fortune can make you, will exult over her slavery."

"The instrument which legalizes our final separation is already in progress," replied the Count; "but," continued he in a low concentrated voice, "deeper and deadlier must be the blow that touches her insensate heart. 'Tis now my hour to triumph,—'tis now my turn to play the tyrant. Courval, I have bestowed her fair young son in perpetual wardship upon my ancient preceptors, the Franciscan monks of Pesth;

—and from the day on which they tear him from her bosom, she shall never look upon his face again—No! by the God of heaven!—never,—*never!*"

"Let us hope that the worthy brethren will find in Count Emerich a better vocation than they instilled into his sire; and that this frighted bird of yours, which hath fled her gilded cage, will not, like the wandering dove of old, extend her free wings too far. I doubt the severity of your purposed chastisements; you resolve to give her the very liberty after which she pines."

"So I insure it to myself, I care not!"

"In order that you may hold a pandemonium in the castle of Szent Miklós,—become a mighty hunter, and free commoner of nature, and let grow your beard?"

"Not I,—by Szent István!" exclaimed Lingotski. "What have I more to do with Hungary? The proud hopes of my youth, the bright prospects of my sanguine patriotism, and the ties by which I strove to bind myself to their fulfilment, are vanished,—past,—forgotten! And so long

as I am cursed by the existence of a wife and child whom I loathe, the land whereon they tread shall never more be pressed by foot of mine. No! Courval,—bear with me,—bear with some impatient moments,—some hours of occasional irritation,—and let our pilgrimage be shared in friendly companionship;—let us to Paris,—England,—a new world,—any where, save Hungary."

"We will visit Howard's vaunted country then," replied Courval, with warm assent to the proposal. "I am a chartered vagrant by temperament, and by principle,—or want of principle. I long to admire more closely the liberty of the press—gang,—to join in the frank independent humours of an election,—for a government borough. The bright atmosphere of cloudless London,—the ethereal brilliancy of a small-coal fire,—the fragrant gas by which we shall be enlightened,—the raw material by which our palate will be familiarized with their bloated flocks and herds,—the sprightly agility of their servants,—the airy elegance of their popular diversions,—what can we desire more to assure us

that the aborigines of the mighty chandler's shop are, as they announce themselves, the most polished, most gifted, and most blest of the nations of the earth?—To England then, and *vogue la galère.*"

Nor did the Chevalier allow the wavering fancies of the Count to wander from the execution of a project, equally gratifying to his malice and to his personal inclinations. He permitted no delays to interrupt their progress; and long ere they reached Hamburgh with a view to embarkation, a mandate bearing the official seal of the Ecclesiastical Court, was on its road to part the best of mothers from the gentlest and most helpless of children!—

It was at the close of a summer evening; and Iölina, unsuspicious of the coming evil, was seated as was her wont, beside the pallet on which the darling of her hopes lay hushed in calm repose. The sweet sunshiny smile of happiness was upon his little lip, and his mother who had laid aside her distaff to contemplate his fair face, rose to remove the lamp whose slanting

light fell too glaringly upon his veiled eyelids. The narrow casements were open to the starlight, and there was not a breath stirring, nor a sound; except the humming of the sand-flies, and the occasional yelp of a village watch-dog, welcoming home the returning footsteps of his weary master. But on a sudden, a faint distant murmur, deepening gradually into the approaching tumult of wheels and horsemen, smote upon the listening ears of the anxious Countess; and the loud simultaneous clamour of the dogs declared that this, at least, was no familiar approach. She looked out;—two carriages were already on the verge of the village; and she knew herself to be the only inhabitant unto whom this untimely and unwelcome visitation could be addressed. Flinging herself on her knees beside the bed which contained her only earthly treasure, "The hour is come," faltered she, "the fatal hour! Lingotski's vengeance overtaketh me;—strengthen me, oh, mighty Heaven! to meet the trial."

As she rose, Katalin and Szava and other members of the devoted household rushed into

the chamber, with hasty and scarcely intelligible assurances of defence against whatever violence might be offered; and while the Countess, pale and breathless, stood listening to their protestations, and soothing their vehemence, the wicket was unbarred, and a group of strangers,—two of whom were clad in monastic raiment, entered the humble apartment.

There is something re-assuring in a religious garb, even if pertaining to a worship we do not share; and as soon as Iölina marked among the intruders these ministers of holiness, her terror subsided. She had indeed nothing to fear from lawless violence. All had been ordered according to the strictest interpretation of the law; for Lingotski, satisfied of his power to wound, was content that the dagger should be uplifted mildly, and with a smile; and the very parchment bearing the great seal of Hungary, which effected a legal separation between him and his abhorred victim, was now placed in her hands by the Fiscal of the Court of Judicature,—a man of credit, and ability, and polished address.

"I cannot read it," said the trembling Countess. "My eyes wax dim,—my heart sinks within me;—for my fears foresee that you hold authority from Count Lingotski, and with no gentle intention. Yet you look compassionately upon me, gentlemen;—you seem unprepared for measures of severity. Explain then the meaning of this deed,—this ominous parchment;—but first, tell me,—re-assure me,—that you seek not to part me from my boy."

With respectful deference, the Fiscal approached Iölina; and leading her gently to a seat, besought her patience while he recited with as much brevity as the circumstances would permit, the legal instrument executed by the Count to confirm their total separation; and explained the liberal measures by which her pecuniary interests had been guarded on the occasion.

"But my boy,—my dear child?" demanded the Countess, throwing back the loosened tresses from her death-like face.

"You will admit, madam," replied the Fiscal with merciful evasion, "that the age of Count

Emerich no longer fits him for female governance."

"Control him who will," said Iölina hurriedly; "rule him as ye list; only do not deprive him of the consolations of a mother's tenderness. Yet wherefore should I fear it! His infirmities plead for him and for me; and forbid you to take him from my watchful love."

Grieving, and hesitating how to declare the truth, the worthy Fiscal beckoned the holy brethren of St. Francis to advance and acknowledge the nature of their mission.

"Unto our poor house, my daughter!" said the elder of the two with solemn emphasis, "hath the lord of Lingotski delegated the fosterhood of his young son. Yet be of good cheer;—fear not, neither weep; within our cloister abide peace and holiness and love, such as prevail not in the common haunts of earth;—and it will be well with the child thou lovest."

Iölina sighed heavily,—gaspingly,—at this announcement;—pressed her hand to her head, to her heart;—and Katalin rushing to her side

was scarcely in time to receive her, as she fell senseless in her arms. And that insensibility was vouchsafed in mercy! It spared her the agony of seeing her sleeping son lifted from his couch, wrapt in a mantle for his midnight journey, and removed from the cabin!

"This shall not be," exclaimed the indignant Szava, attempting to animate the resistance of his fellow villagers against the authority of the strangers. "Look upon me,—look upon these men, my friends and companions;—we have strength and justice on our side,—and betide ill or well, peace or bloodshed, ye shall not rob a mother of her child. The Countess Lingotski shall never be wronged under my father's roof-tree."

"My son!" interposed the elder monk, "it is written that thou shalt not lift thy hand in violence against the servant of thy God! In His name,—in the name of the blessed church, I command your patience. The law is with us in that we do,—the law, both spiritual and temporal; through which, and the authority reposed with us

by the father of the child named Emerich Lingotski, we claim him at thy hands. And wherefore oppose our right by this clamorous resistance? Wherefore fear ye, my children, for his weal and future guidance? The mother that bore him would not tender him more dearly than will the brotherhood of St. Francis, unto whom his tutelage hath been committed. Unmeet were the hand of a woman for such a charge;—unmeet the governance of a mother's doating will, for a man child, and a magnat of Hungaria."

"Át least," answered Szava more reverently, and somewhat re-assured by the mild instances of the minister of his faith, "at least, holy father, tarry with us until the Countess recover some consciousness, that *she* too may be moved by your persuasions. Take not her child from her bosom unsanctioned by the blessing of her lips."

"Art thou her friend who wouldst do this thing?" interrupted the Fiscal; "better shall we consult her interest in sparing her the anguish of a parting hour."

"Consider her awaking," persisted Szava.

"We cannot, we dare not incur the risk of telling her that the son she so dearly treasures—is lost to her for ever."

"I will myself remain behind," said the Fiscal humanely, "and attempt to moderate and counsel the first impulses of Countess Lingotski's despair."

And while the monks and their attendants hastily profited by the impression that had been made on the rude auditory, to remove their little charge to the carriage, and quit the village, the agent of the Count seated himself in the wooden porch; listening alternately to the departing wheels which, grating hoarsely in the sand, announced that his cruel purpose was accomplished, and to the murmurs by which the surrounding peasantry testified their generous sympathy in the bitter fate of the bereaved mother. His firmness of demeanour however soon subdued their indignation against himself, and the interest which he gave to their diffuse details of Iölina's blameless existence, and intense devotion to the child of her affliction,—

and of the regard she had won for herself in the wild district of Vanicza, emboldened them to pray for his good offices in her behalf.

"Do not let her enemies prevail," said they, with frank cordiality; "do not let the gracious Countess be oppressed and persecuted! She asks but the indulgence of remaining in our poor village, so she may keep her fair boy by her sweet side; she is happy with us, sir,—the youngling is happy;—and gathers strength in our open pastures. Were the night less dark, you would see the trace of his little *opintschen** in the sand, where he hath chased the marmots to their burrows. Do not take him from us."

Without questioning how far such sports and such companionship might befit the heir of the all but regal house of Lingotski, the Fiscal relieved their apprehensions by warm assurances of his good will towards the Countess; and as the most ready appeal to their powers of comprehension, he instanced the numbers of thousands of florins

* Walachian boots.

appointed by Count Lingotski for the dowry of his wife. But as he spoke, a cry,—a stifled shriek within, announced that the Countess was recovering to a sense of the still deeper agony which awaited her revival; and the worthy agent, with little inclination for the task, re-entered the cabin, to witness the sorrow of a mother weeping for her child,—a Rachel who would not be comforted. He strove indeed, but vainly strove to fix her attention upon his representations,—to calm her despair,—to rouse her hopes and excite her resolution.

"You love your child, gracious lady," said he;—"you cannot surely resist or resent an arrangement which removes him from the filthy obscurity of a Sclavonian village, unto a house of liberal education, in the capital of that kingdom in which his high estate will one day endow him with interest and influence? you cannot surely desire that the heir of Szent Miklós should waste his unprofitable youth in the melon-fields of Vanicza? Count Emerich is already on his route towards Pesth, wherein his noble father has

considerately fixed his future abode. The gracious Countess herself, if I am rightly informed, boasts friends and kindred in the capital who will not fail to support her claims,—I will not say *protect* her helplessness, since nothing but the most honourable usage is intended towards her. And surely she will not longer abide in a degrading retreat, to which a moment of rashness and irritation can alone have directed her steps;—surely I shall succeed in persuading her to follow her son without delay to the capital?"

"Doubt it not," exclaimed Iölina, clasping her hands together in the intensity of her utter misery. "Doubt it not,—for I cannot resign my child and live. Methinks thou meanest me kindly," said she, "thy looks and voice betray compassion, and thy name was an honoured one in my early home. Counsel me then,—counsel and assist a most unhappy woman;—take me to my boy."

"I would willingly do so, madam," replied the Fiscal with evident reluctance, "did my power so far extend;—but Count Lingotski has imperatively disposed of the person of his son.

Nevertheless I should advise your instant removal to Ofen, where the best counsels and a more beseeming state would attend you. My carriage waits,—if you will honour me by accepting my escort; you have need of some hours of rest, and at day-break your servants will have prepared for your departure."

"Oh! no, no!" faltered Iölina, "do not detain me from my child—or at least from the air he breathes;—let us away, and quickly. Katalin, Szava,—will you attend my journey?"

"To our life's end!" was the earnest reply of both;—while the Sclavonian added a muttered prayer that his mistress might not live to need the defence of his arm against her persecutors. The good Fiscal smiled at the ungracious insinuation; but so well did he address himself to the feelings and prejudices of his hosts during the short hour which preceded their departure, that the villagers beheld the object of their veneration, their beloved *Gröfne,* lifted into the carriage, with feelings of regret unmixed with anxiety for her welfare.

"Heaven help her!—Heaven guard her!" exclaimed a multitude of voices, as the vehicle traversed the little settlement.

"And Heaven *will* guard her," was the solemn reply of Szava's aged mother, "for she trusts unto its power and its mercy!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hopeless I call on thee, my son—my son!

ABBA THULE.

LONG before the afflicted traveller had reached her destination, her frame had sunk exhausted under the pressure of her misfortunes, and her knowledge of the whole and mighty extent of her calamity. The Fiscal, however unwillingly, had been compelled to own that the power and the will of Count Lingotski had equally secured his son from her superintendence and interference; and that the little Emerich had been placed as a sacred and irretrievable deposit, under the wardship of the Franciscan brotherhood.

"I will go to Lingotski's feet," had been her first wild answer to this grievous intelligence.

"My humiliation will win favour in his cruel sight! And let him, since he hath willed it so, put me away in public dishonour;—let him estrange himself without return from the wife of his early choice;—but 'twere a violation of every heavenly ordinance to part me from my child; the child of mine affliction,—whom I have so tended,—so watched,—so fondly, fondly loved! No! he cannot persist in this wicked determination."

Her companion, unable to offer comfort, resolved to permit the Countess to relieve her feelings and exhaust their vehemence by expression.

"You did not see my boy, sir?" exclaimed she suddenly,—"he slept,—his gracious eyes were closed, when you reached Vanicza and robbed me of my last consolation. Oh! had he looked into your face, and joined his entreaties to mine, you would have taken pity upon us. My boy—my poor lost boy!—Yet he was not fashioned so fairly as many are," she resumed. "He was frail and feeble, and God had marked him with a chastening hand;—but if gentleness of spirit—if loveliness

of feature and expression,—and more, *far* more dear than all,—if watchful and untiring filial tenderness might win a mother's love,—Emerich was the goodliest, the fairest of earth's lovely creatures. His looks were all affection,—his very accents were a caress,—his sweet mild loving words! Even in his sleep his hand would seek his mother's,—his subdued voice falter her name; and he would steal from his sportive play to lay his curled head upon my knee, and win my endearments by his patient silence. And to give him up,—to lay me down each weary night without having blest his innocent sleep,—to wake and look for him in vain! oh no!—it cannot be,—it *shall* not be;—I will wait at Lingotski's knees till he hath granted my prayer."

"Let me implore you, madam, rather to resign yourself to an inevitable destiny, than to lean upon a reed which cannot fail to pierce you. Count Lingotski hath already quitted Hungary,—and for years."

"And whither hath he shaped his course?" demanded Iölina, with renewed despondency.

"Surely my letter may yet bear towards him the terms of my entreaty."

"Alas! that I should be forced to withhold even this source of expectation;—I myself am ignorant of his destination; Count Lingotski and Monsieur de Courval departed from Szent Miklós, and"—

"Nay then, if Sigmond be so companioned, my chance is poor indeed."

"Still, madam, there exists a hope"—

"None,—*none* for me! The hand which was uplifted to smite his child, will deal no mercy,—the cruel heart which cast its misfortune in its shrinking and tender ears, will close itself against a mother's lamentation."

"Let me implore you to refrain from allusions which would but augment that spirit of enmity, madam, which you have already stirred up against your own peace."

"You seal my lips," said Iölina, "henceforth I will bear my wrong more patiently."

The Fiscal omitted no occasion of consoling and counselling his lovely companion; and having

reached the city, he did all that humanity could suggest, and more than submission to his employer would have allowed many of his profession to undertake, in depositing her with care and reverence and strong recommendation, in a well-accredited hotel; guarded by the immediate care of her personal servants, and furnished with claims upon the bankers through whom her dowry was to pass to her hands. The man of the law was aware of the near connexion between the Countess and the Baron Zeriny; he had even heard rumours of the existence of yet tenderer ties between them; nor could he suppose that in a city inhabited by her own family, and which had been her former residence, she was now a friendless and abandoned stranger. But even Iölina herself, although deeply wounded in spirit, was at first unconscious of, or indifferent to this state of isolation. She could not teach herself to believe that the retreat of her son was wholly exclusive; or that she should be denied the privilege of sometimes looking upon his face, —of sometimes listening to his voice; and the

assurances which she received on all sides that the infirmity of the boy would probably experience amendment under the well-known skill of the monks of St. Francis, relieved in some degree the anxieties of her distress.

But could it be called a relief from sorrow, to watch, and wake, and weep by night,—to wander, like some unquiet haunting by day, around the walls which shut out the solitary object of her love,—or to sit entranced during the hallowed rites of her religion, gazing upon the consecrated screen behind which the hope of her heart lay concealed from her straining eyes?—And such was the tenour of Iölina's perturbed existence! She had possessed herself of a habitation commanding a view of the high walls of the monastery; and passed the larger portion of her days in kneeling beside the altars of its chapel, which is open to every Christian footstep; and in the sweet certainty that the same roof sheltered her head, and that of her little Emerich, her prayers rose more fervently, and the hopes of grace beamed more brightly before her eyes.

"They bid me take patience," she would say to herself, as she returned after these periods of consolation, to her solitary home. "They tell me, it is a mother's duty to yield up her son to harsher schooling than her tenderness can assume. But they know not the mild gentleness of mine,—they know not his docility,—his grievous infirmity,—Emerich is not for the battle-field, or the hardy duties of manhood;—his path must lead over the smoother regions of earth's wild wilderness; nor courts, nor camps, will engage his gentle wishes. Home,—calm, fearless home,—will be the sphere of his happiness; and for that a mother's discipline had been his fittest preparation. We had never breathed an hour apart,—our hearts were twined by a closer and a holier tie than those of other parents and their offspring,—closer, far closer. And, oh! infinite mercy of Heaven! hear my prayer, and spare me this daily renewal of my complaining,—of my expostulation! give him back to my yearning heart, for a day, for an hour, for the short and precious space of a mother's blessing!—then,—then will I take patience!"

Repeatedly and importunately the Countess had addressed her entreaties to the Superior of the monastery. "I would not deny so just a claim, my daughter," had been the reiterated answer of the compassionate old man, "could I reconcile my submission to the instances of thy maternal love, with my bounden duty to the Lingotski. A father is constituted by the law of the realm, sole master of the destinies of his son; and thou and I alike must bow to the decree Thou best knowest by what transgression thou hast provoked the severities of thy lord;—but address thyself to him with humbleness,—procure his sanction to thy desire,—and when thou returnest to my gates, my soul shall rejoice in thy triumph."

With hopes renewed by this consolatory admonition, the Countess did indeed address herself by letter to Lingotski, nor was sparing of humility or energy of entreaty. She spoke too of the past;—she reminded him of the familiar happiness of their early affection, and of the unmerited severity which had wrought their pre-

sent disunion. She spoke, as the outpouring of a woman's heart can best speak,—eloquently,—warmly,—persuasively. The only difficulty that remained to be surmounted, was that of securing his receipt of her letter.

To effect this necessary purpose, she resolved upon a personal interview with the banker in whose hands alone the secret of the Count's pilgrimage, and its destination, had been deposited; and remembering the warm and sycophantic assiduity with which the slightest expression of her will had been received by Baron Iskales during her season of prosperity, she failed not to place her confident and sanguine expectations of success upon the result of her appeal. She heeded not however, or had forgotten, that the Jewish Baron in abjuring his national creed, and national inheritance, had put on the garb of Christianity but as a passport to the honours and earthly treasures of Christendom; and that his calling as a banker,—the one of all others best calculated to narrow his views, obscure his understanding, and freeze the genial current of his

soul,—had only served to smooth and varnish over his calm sleepy demeanour, and confirm the selfish baseness of his callous heart.

"He had received no commission," he said, "from Count Lingotski to acquaint any person with his address; it had been confided to him for better security, and purposes of business."

But the Herr Baron would at least admit the claim of a *wife* to obtain such information!

Under all the circumstances it appeared to him, on the contrary, that the Countess herself was the person most pointedly excluded from the knowledge. "In short, Madam," said the cunning old man, "I should strongly advise you to restrain your impatience; the Count will probably return in a year or two, and then"—

"And then I shall have little need to trouble him or his. And do you really refer me to that remote period?" exclaimed Iölina. "Can you really refuse your aid in uniting a mother with her child?"

The half-closed eyes of Baron Iskales expanded at an energy of speech so unusual and

unavailing, and which sprung not from, nor regarded the gain or the loss even of a maravedi. "Was there no other business," he inquired with deliberate coolness, "in which he could have the pleasure to serve Countess Lingotski?"

"Heaven preserve me from needing much service or much succour from thee, or those who resemble thee," exclaimed Iölina, irritated beyond the patience of her serene temper. "Look," said she, lifting up her frail slender hand to the sunshine, "look,—and know that death will soon relieve me from my heavy burden of care. A wasted frame, a breaking heart, remind me that I cannot long importune mortal man with my afflictions; and thou who biddest me with cruel irony await the return of the Count, see that thy conscience rebuke thee not too sharply, when the sound of my passing bell knells in thine ears!"

While the Countess appeared destined to endure, day after day, a renewal of mortifications such as these, the little object of all her tender solicitude, although at first scarcely less afflicted

than his unhappy mother, was becoming gradually reconciled to his appointed destiny. He knew not, however, that a sentence of perpetual separation had been pronounced between them;—by a merciful deception he had been led to believe his absence from her side, a limited period; and to look forward to a reunion with his mother, as the reward of his exertions and application. With what ardour did his little mind labour in such a cause,—with what delight did his affectionate heart anticipate the joy of their meeting! His zeal outdid even that of his preceptors,—his tasks were hoarded like treasures beneath his pillow, and became his sweetest of recreations. Poor Emerich!—poor deceived boy!—he dreamed not while his little bosom was beating with such proud animation, and stimulating him to such high exertions, that his mother,—his broken-spirited mother,—was kneeling hopeless and helpless in the chapel of his prison, and recommending him to the infinite mercy of that Providence by which her days of grief and disappointment were already numbered.

"My sister!—my sweet sister!—was this well done?" whispered a gentle voice beside her, as the Countess rose one evening from her knees, and attempted to make her tremulous way between the slender-clustered columns of bright marble which decorate the transept.

"Sidonia!" exclaimed the sufferer, thankfully accepting the arm proffered for her support, and turning towards home. "Whence comest thou, and wherefore? Alas! thou hast tarried long! And who,—my sister, bade thee seek me here?"

"My own heart bade me hasten to reprove the unkindness of thine, in keeping me ignorant of thy mischances, and grievous indisposition. Lean on me, Iölina,—I am come to be thy comforter."

"Too late!" murmured the Countess with a melancholy smile. "My comfort must be henceforth from on high."

"Not so, my sister; health and happiness await thee yet,—where there is no guilt, can be no despair. I know all, Ina!—Katalin, my ancient

bower-woman, more kindly-minded towards me than thyself, borrowed old Nadasch's hand to acquaint me with Lingotski's mysterious departure, and with his harshness to a wife he deserved not to call his own."

"But hast thou license of admittance to my poor boy?" demanded the Countess as they reached the hotel.

"Alas! not more than thyself! Yet wherefore droop, love? Courage and perseverance may do much."

"Not where life itself is failing."

Princess Betthyani, whose union with Colonel Howard had been deferred for a time, in consequence of the sudden declaration of war with France, which, notwithstanding his intention of retirement from military life had sufficed to hasten him to head quarters, did not hesitate to fly to the aid and comfort of her afflicted sister, the moment that Katalin's considerate communication reached her hand. She came, sanguine with hope, and with all the high and animated courage of her heart bent upon

renewing the intercourse of the mother and her son; nor could she be prevailed upon by Iölina's representations to share in her despair of success, until she had run the same round of expostulation and entreaty, of denial and mortification. At length, her means of supplication, unavailing as they were, became exhausted; and driven to the last resource by the daily spectacle of Iölina's wasting frame and declining health, her enterprising spirit suggested one last attempt to attain an object so vitally important.

"We must to the Palatine, my poor sister," said the Princess resolutely. "Our rank necessarily opens our path to his throne; and his authority shall interfere to do thee justice. I will instantly demand an audience."

"For thyself, be it then," replied the enfeebled Countess. "I am myself no longer capable of meeting the cold and worldly inquisition of a court."

"It will not need," answered Sidonia—"said I not that our audience would be private? And thou must come Ina; yea, truly thou *must* come,"

she continued, imprinting a kiss upon the forehead of her suffering sister, and contemplating the mournful and touching expression of her beauty. "A mother's eloquence will prevail, when mine were insufficient; fear not nor hesitate Iölina; I will prepare all for the attempt."

On the following evening accordingly, the two lovely sisters whose request for an audience had been promptly and most graciously accorded, presented themselves with every accustomed form at the Palace of Buda, and were instantly conducted through the state apartments to the Cabinet of Audience of the Palatine. "My sister, arm thyself with better courage,—with *fortitude*, dearest Iölina," whispered Sidonia, as the Countess sank upon an ottoman in the anteroom, exhausted by her unwonted efforts. "Assume the loftiness of spirit which befits the name thou bearest,—which becomes thy unspotted self, and thy gifted mind. Thou art come to claim a right, Iölina;—throw off the timidity of a suppliant; and as it will be fearlessly demanded, so will it be graciously conceded."

The Countess had been attired by the care of Sidonia, in simple weeds of sable velvet; which, although unincumbered by ornament of any description, gave an air of dignity to the habitual grace of her figure. Her long raven hair was simply bound round the brow whose deathlike paleness imparted an almost unnatural hue to those dark tresses; amid which sorrow had shed some traces of lustrous silver, such as the lapse of twenty-five short summers should scarcely have admitted there.— Many a beauty of estate as high, had smiled in those gorgeous apartments, and many a dame enriched by more precious adornment; but none, *not one*, had ever borne upon her cheek so sweet a grace of patient loveliness, or in her step such a modest irresolution, as seemed strangely contrasted with the noble person and dignified air of Iölina Lingotski.

"I am most anxious to present a sister to the notice of your Imperial Highness," said Princess Betthyani, after having gracefully received the distinguishing courtesies with which the Palatine was pleased to mark her welcome, in token of

early and familiar acquaintance. "A sister for whom I should have less regret and hesitation in bespeaking your Highness's indulgence, were it not needed through the perverse unkindness of Count Lingotski."

The Palatine preventing the humble salute with which Iölina was about to receive his extended hand, imprinted the gracious kiss of courtly usage upon her fair forehead.

"For *his* sake, and for *yours*, Madam, the Countess would be most welcome here," observed the Archduke, "for her own,—if I may profit by my privilege to read so sweet a countenance,—every where. In what can I be so fortunate as to offer my poor assistance to Countess Lingotski?"

Sidonia looked anxiously at her friend, and saw that she was too deeply overcome to utter a single syllable. "My brother," said she accepting the seat to which she was led by the Palatine, "your Imperial Highness but too well knows the fact,—is of a most wayward and flighty character; as every foregone occasion of his life

unhappily avouches. In one of his fitful fancies he has sanctioned a decree of separation against a blameless wife;—and by a still more wanton act of cruelty, has given over his only child to the control and sole guidance of a religious community—forbidding all access to its unhappy mother."

"Some rumour of this had already reached me," observed the Palatine with an air of interest; "and even previous to the happiness of a personal acquaintance with Countess Lingotski, I had heard of it with deep regret; for although the mode of education projected for the young Count will probably insure for him the high dignities of the Hungarian church, yet it could neither have been thwarted nor retarded by occasional interviews with an affectionate mother. But however sincere my sympathy in her distress, I can hardly judge in what my interference may advantage Countess Lingotski. Yourself, my dear Princess, are enabled by our long acquaintance to appreciate the difficulties I have ever had in dealing with the Count your brother's

untoward spirit. His Imperial Majesty, through the intercessions of his faithful servant, your late lamented lord, was pleased to overlook many offences of a most serious character, in order to insure a better understanding, and peace and quietness, between the Emperor's council and one of the leading magnats of his kingdom of Hungary. In my own proper person, I have endured much slight, and much disrespect at his hands, for the maintenance of the same national views. It will be therefore impossible for me to renew past irritations, and hazard a fresh rupture, in furtherance of an object that were far better secured by private adjustment, and through the medium of Princess Betthyani's sisterly influence. Permit me, madam," said he, turning to Iölina, "permit me earnestly to counsel such a mode of proceeding."

The shock of this repulse was too great for her presence of mind. "Pity me," she said, suddenly casting herself at the feet of the Palatine. "In your Imperial Highness's mercy is my last hope; blight it not; oh! blight it not by this

cold kindness. You are a father, sir,—a fond one and a gentle;—think upon your children, and do not overlook the misery of mine, through the motives of mere state policy. Give me—give me back my son."

"Could I do so indeed, without infringing on public law and private right," observed the Palatine, with deep feeling, and attempting to raise her from his feet, "you should not brook the suspense of a moment. But Count Lingotski is the sole master of his child; and the constitution of the realm wisely limits my power over both. I cannot grant your petition," said the Archduke, "but I truly sympathise in your distress, and pray you to accept from me individually that aid and service which, as Palatine of Hungary, I am unable to afford you. It must, I fear, be limited to an appeal unto the Count in your behalf. We are scarcely friends," continued he with a smile, "still less correspondents; but I will despatch a courier this night on your errand, according to the instructions which the banker Iskales will scarcely withhold at my bidding. I trust you

will now permit me to remind you that the Archduchess awaits the honour of receiving you this evening; Princess Betthyani is become too much a stranger here, for me to undertake the excuses with which I see her about to charge me; and her fair sister can be still less forgiven for having so long withheld from our circle the loveliness and grace to whose presence it has so just a claim. Must you indeed be gone?—Then let me trust, that an early return will recompense our present disappointment."

Sidonia respectfully excused their departure on the plea,—and it was no feigned one,—of indisposition; and as the Palatine graciously reconducted them to the ante-chamber, where a chamberlain was in waiting to receive them, she could scarcely restrain the expression of her contempt and indignation against the conciliatory deference marked towards her brother by his forbearance. "Return!" said she mentally, as they were conducted down the splendid stairs of state, "*return*, saith he, to his court?—bright court!—magnanimous prince!—courageous upholder of the

Austrian yoke!—never! my fathers have held ere now their regal state in this degraded kingdom; —henceforth be Howard's country mine, where even-handed justice quails not under oligarchical insolence;—and a rebellious magnat hath no terrors for the anointed ruler of the people!"

From that memorable evening, Countess Lingotski scarcely attempted to oppose the rapid progress of the decay which consumed her strength; and the precariousness of her condition became so painfully apparent, that Sidonia, whose ceaseless care and most compassionate attendance was devoted to her service, could no longer blind herself to the probable result. "Heaven send me patience," she would exclaim as she turned from the sufferer's couch. "My brother's savage obduracy will surely prove the destruction of the sweetest of earth's creatures; nor can I, nor any, speak the one brief word which would rescue her from the grave. How powerless,—how helpless is the condition of woman;—methinks it seems to invite persecution."

At that moment some retrospective thought

brought to her mind the remembrance of Cassian, of his early attachment to, and present neglect of his unhappy cousin. But Sidonia, who had been intimately acquainted with his best qualities, could not bring herself to believe this apparent desertion the effect of levity or indifference. "He cannot surely know of her afflictions," said she: "I will seek him,—try him,—appeal to his past affection: he must not,—he will not refuse his aid and kindness to its dying object." And with this purpose in view, she lost no time in presenting herself at the familiar haunt of her earlier years,—the hotel Zeriny.

CHAPTER XIX.

She was my life's unerring light,
Which seen, became a part of sight,
And rose where'er I turned my eye,
The morning star of memory!

BYRON.

BARON ZERINY was alone when the Princess was respectfully ushered into his library. It was a gloomy but magnificent chamber, rich in all the external attributes of studious research and philosophical inquiry; and as its grave and dignified inmate courteously advanced, to offer his homage unto a woman whom he had of old so deeply reverenced, the paleness of his high forehead, and the hair, slightly blanched, by which it was shaded, struck her with as much surprise as the agitation of her own demeanour excited in the mind of the Baron.

"Time alone cannot have wrought this mighty change, Cassian," said Sidonia, as she gazed mournfully upon his withered youth. "A deeper sorrow than I could have wished to so old and true a friend, hath been with thee since we parted."

"The unlooked for honour of this visit, is indeed a pledge of kind and ancient friendship," answered Cassian, gravely kissing her offered hand, and gently conducting the Princess to a *fauteuil.*

"I am come to urge its claims," interrupted Sidonia, "and those of another person, once far dearer,—once most dear to both."

"The Countess Lingotski!" faltered Cassian, growing paler than before.

"*Iölina,*" observed the Princess with emphasis. "Say,—why hast thou abandoned her?"

"Why have *I* abandoned her,—and is it *you* who ask it?—you, who know that her fickle renouncement of myself hath blighted my existence like a cleaving curse!—You might have

spared me the accusation," said the Baron, rising and hastily traversing the chamber; then with a sudden effort approaching nearer to the Princess.

"I was driven from my home and her,—you know it well," said he in a low stern voice,—"by the persecutions of my family. I forsook her side, deceived by my mother's promise that no other should approach it; and even while I was enduring the bitterness of exile for her sake,—she gave her fickle faith to another. What I suffered on learning her infidelity, it were now vain to tell;—I renounced my country—and, as I sometimes fear,—hastened the end of my ambitious father,—by my resentment and wayward vengeance. But what I felt,—what I bore,—the iron which rankled then so deeply within my heart,—struck not so grievous a wound, as did my after-knowledge of—of the Countess—of Iölina's worthlessness. It seemed as if the injury towards her husband, afflicted me more deeply than that she had done to me;—ay!—in truth it *did* afflict me more:—to learn the task of loathing and despising the sweet—the pure

companion of my youth,—was indeed a labour of wretchedness."

"Out on thee, for the credulous thought!" exclaimed Sidonia. "Heaven's brightest angel is not more spotless than my sister."

"You will scarcely deny, Madam, that Count Lingotski's long residence abroad arose from jealousy,—from his discovery of"—

"From *jealousy*, an' thou wilt;—but of whom? —Even of thyself, Cassian! It was thou, and thou only, against whose influence Lingotski's suspicions permitted themselves to extend. From his own lips I heard the accusation,—and from his own temperament I judge with horror, that had he indeed discovered a shadow of infidelity in the conduct of his wife, his dagger had been his prompt avenger."

"Do I hear rightly?" exclaimed Baron Zeriny, seizing the hand of the Princess, and pressing it within his own. "Had we but met before,— oh! had this precious interview been earlier vouchsafed,—what hours of bitter, bitter care might have been spared me!—And I, who dared

to distrust her,—who presumed to doubt the purity of that sweet heart,—of that heart which was once so wholly mine, which was once so cruelly wrested from me! Yet look upon me, Princess,—look on me, kindest, best Sidonia!—and say,—have I not atoned for the error which wrought my wrong,—for the feeble, temporizing mind which provoked the injury? Say,—do I not bear the deep and uneffaced trace of sorrow and remorse, and the hoarded anguish of years? By the great God who hears me! I have never known one peaceful hour since my betrothed wife was forced into the arms of another!—You shrink from me, madam,—you would remind me that you are the sister of Lingotski! Yet pardon the violence of one, whose lips have been sealed for years upon a subject which formed his sole theme of musing and sorrow, from bitter day to day!"

"I am no severe auditor of thy self-upbraiding, Cassian,—or rather I do but share too grievously in thy remorse. My own incautious folly, and kindly-intended interference assisted to heap those coals of fire upon Iölina's head which are now consuming her!"

"Even *now*, sayest thou? There have been rumours rife among us, that Count Lingotski's affection for his lovely wife had prompted him to overlook her past offence; nay! my friend Prince Eglevies himself was resident during the past winter at Szent Miklós, and bore evidence to my ears of Iölina's happiness, and well-being, and re-union with her lord."

"Alas!" said Sidonia, "thou seemest to exult for my poor sister even now, when adversity and cruelty have done their worst against her,—now when she is sinking to the grave under the pressure of her injuries. But I have little time to waste on telling them, and little courage; for they bear a heavy accusation against my only brother. He hath deserted her, Cassian,—her child hath been torn from her by force,—and Iölina, abandoned,—slandered,—and broken-hearted,—is dying here in Pesth."

"Great Heaven! am I so near my cousin;—and so unconsciously!"

"For many weeks she hath been wasting away in the hopelessness of sorrow;—and now I am

come to console and attend her, but to little purpose;—she cannot, cannot live!" said the Princess, attempting in vain to restrain her tears.

"Let me go to her," said Cassian hastily. "Let me seek her forgiveness."

"Not so,—the shock of any unusual occurrence would destroy her. Calm thy sorrow, Cassian, as I do mine; and think how thou mayest best aid me in bringing back her child into her bosom."

Sidonia now acquainted him at length with every detail respecting the seclusion of Count Emerich, and the interdictions by which it been secured by his father; and ended by imploring him to ponder over the best manner of effecting an interview between the Countess and her son, while she herself returned to her post beside the pillow of the sufferer.

Long,—long after she had departed from his presence, Cassian Zeriny, in whose mind this unexpected interview had excited the most startling and contradictory emotions, sat lost in thought and perplexity. The remembrances

which he had so long and earnestly striven to stifle within the solitude of his bosom, had been called into a painful animation of existence by the tidings he had received; and the beloved of his youth appeared to rise up before his eyes, re-invested with all her first claims and mighty attractions;—reminding him of the disinterested gift of her early tenderness,—of the unmanly indecision which had converted it into a bitter portion,—and lastly, of the ready trust with which he had listened to calumnies against one whom he should have better known to appreciate. He looked round the decorated chamber, and remembered her light foot,—her sweet presence,—her joyous voice! he looked into his own accusing mind, and saw her stretched upon a neglected bed of death,—despised and rejected of her kindred,—and bereft of every dearer consolation! And tears, such as his solitude had often witnessed, though never poured forth so bitterly as now, gushed from the eyes which he had overshadowed with his extended hands.

But there was no time to lose in self-

accusation;—he started up, and rushed to the performance of a now imperative duty—that of attempting to remove the obstacles which divided the expiring mother from the child of her affections. Hastily and as in a dream, he traversed the city. All wore its wonted semblance; the crowded quays sent up their busy hum,—the gilded spires sparkled in the sunshine,—the breezes from the Danube burst freshly through the squares,—all wore their wonted semblance! but the indifference with which Cassian had gazed upon the familiar scene on the preceding day, had vanished with its close.

Iölina was in Pesth!—Iölina was sheltered within those walls,—that gushing air might refresh her dying brow,—those gilded towers of holiness might bring comfort to her dying eyes,—could they still remain indifferent to Cassian? Oh no!—he felt as he passed onwards through the crowded streets, that he would have given worlds to still their tumult; and to attemper the city into a solemn deference towards the parting hour of his beloved!

The high and general estimation commanded

by the character of Baron Zeriny, and by his position in the world, obtained him ready admittance to the chief authorities of the city, and a favourable hearing. From each and all he elicited sympathy and counsel,—but from none redress or assistance. The venerable Primas, Prince Rudna, the Archbishop of Gran, in whose palace he was ever a favoured guest, condescended by argument and calm representation to convince him of the danger and difficulty of infringing upon the private rights of a magnat of the kingdom.

"Count Lingotski," said the good old man, "is constituted by both civil and religious law, by rights divine and human, sole arbiter of the destinies of his son; and to set at nought his will, and interfere with his paternal purposes, were to disquiet king and counsel in order to gratify a mother's doating folly. But take the advice of an old man,—of thy father's cotemporary, Baron, —and effect thy purpose by concession and gentleness, rather than by the strong arm of authority. Accept too this ring, Baron Zeriny. It is a signet well known to the superior of every religious

community which boasts the protection of that national church now submitted to my unworthy governance; and it will entitle thee to claim an audience of the Grand Prior of St. Francis. He is a good man, though something jealous of power, and petulant from great age; but furthered by my friendship and its mandate, I do not fear but you will find him tractable."

In pursuance of this wise and moderate counsel, Cassian Zeriny presented himself before those lofty gates which appeared to rise, like an enchanted barrier, between himself and his wishes; but upon the present occasion his demand for admittance was stoutly negatived by a lay-vicar who had been summoned to attend him. "The reverend father has been so frequently importuned and so greatly harassed on this behest," replied he firmly, "that he declines further conference with the friends of the lady of Lingotski. His duty to his young charge forbids all compromise."

"You will scarcely refuse to bear the signet of his Eminence the Primas to your Superior," interrupted Zeriny; and the brother, having

hastened from the wicket with the precious talisman, returned in a few minutes with an altered demeanour, to usher the impatient guest into the presence of the Grand Prior.

The Superior of St. Francis was an aged and a learned man, who had passed his whole life in the service of the Christian church, and a large portion of it in watchful vigilance over the interests of his convent. But unto his limited apprehension, the appeal of a mother yearning after a lost child partook too largely of the character of human passion, to be heard with favour.

"I counselled this restless woman," observed the old man peevishly, as Baron Zeriny concluded his earnest prayer, "to apply to the noble Count Lingotski for a remission of his sentence of exclusion. Wherefore can she not abide by the result,—wherefore taketh she not patience to wait his reply?"

"She is perishing,—reverend father,—dying;—of no disease, no wound!—nor hunger, nor thirst nor ailment destroy her,—nor aught save the anguish of a broken heart. Canst thou still

deny her plea for pity,—canst thou still urge patience for her remedy?—Her hours are already numbered!"

"Then least of all were it meet or fitting that a servant of the church should aid in the disturbance of her parting soul by the renewal of sublunary affections. Be the consolations of the true Faith supreme with its suffering daughter!"

"Father!" said Cassian, impatiently enduring the cold repulse instigated by infirmity and a bigot creed, "Father; thou knowest me to be a diligent, faithful, and zealous son of the Catholic church,—a liberal benefactor of thine own community. My father's ashes,—my mother's,—are sheltered in the fane of St. Francis; nor have I scantily or ungratefully recognized that holy bond upon my reverence. Ill were the deed to vaunt how large a portion of my revenues hath been already subjected to thy disposal; but twice their value,—double the sum, shall increase the endowment, so thou wilt comply with my entreaty."

"My son!" replied the aged Prior with an air of stern reproval, "this is unseemly"—

"Hear me—hear me to an end," interrupted Cassian, "nor let thy severity be premature. I ask but the poor boon of receiving the boy under cover of the night, that I may bear him, for one short hour, into his mother's bosom; and, by the Heavenly presence in which we stand! he shall be returned ere day-break unto thy wardship. Oh! reply not hastily,—bethink thee well that no better interest is perilled by the concession,—and that through thy ministry, an innocent heart may be rescued from the grave."

"I have undertaken a solemn trust," answered the Prior mildly, "and to break it were sin. It is written 'thou shalt not do evil that good may come!'"

"It is written, that the merciful man shall receive mercy;—and thinkest thou that a dying mother's gratitude shall avail thee nothing? that the prayers of the sick who have been healed,—of the naked who have been clothed,—of the hungry who have been fed through the means which I place at thy disposal, will in nothing redound to the honour of St. Francis, or to the

pious contentment of his chartered servants?—My father! 'tis but a new duty which courts thy performance!"

"Now Heaven instruct my ignorance!" said the perplexed old man." How may I deny such a petition?"

"Deny it not,—deny it not, good father!" exclaimed Cassian, kneeling before him. "Never till this hour did I bend my knee to mortal man, nor will I arise till I have gained thine assent. Say that I may return at midnight,—say that the boy shall be committed to my charge;—nor forget that the interposition of the Primas is at once a warrant of my due performance of my share of the contract, and a sanctification of thine own. Turn not away;—thy merest sign, thy poorest token of acquiescence shall suffice me, and I will so wrest its interpretation, as to exculpate thee in every eye."

"Go then, in peace and hope"—replied the holy Prior, "and if there be evil in the deed, rest it on thy head."

"I accept the responsibility with gratitude,"

exclaimed the Baron, eagerly kissing the withered hand extended towards him; and without hazarding a change of sentiment by one moment's delay, he hastened from the reverend presence, in order to carry his tidings of success, and happiness, and hope, to the ear of Sidonia. He scarcely felt the earth beneath his feet as he left the gloomy precincts of the priory.

But with what agony,—with what a bitter and tumultuous sense of agony was his heart assailed as he approached the very gates of Iölina's dwelling,—Iölina, the long-lost,—long-injured,—long beloved! He was ushered by Szava into an untenanted and dreary saloon; but still every familiar object there was hers, and spoke of her. The book half-closed, and destined like herself to oblivion,—the flowers withering in utter neglect,—all the affecting disarray which marks the house where the hollow footsteps of Death are heard approaching,—met his tearful eye and oppressed his sinking heart, as he traversed the lonely *suite* of chambers!

"Is she better?" he demanded in an intense

whisper of Princess Betthyani, who advanced to meet him from an inner room.

Sidonia replied by an uncontrolled burst of tears.

"Do not," said he feelingly, "embitter the better hopes, the new existence which I bring.—Sidonia! this very night the boy will be restored to her arms."

"Pray Heaven they may then unclose to fold him to that blighted heart; her most skilful attendants have limited her survival to the coming night!" Then taking the hand of the Baron with grateful regard, "Cassian!" said she, "accept my thanks, brief and graceless though they be. Alas! we have been all to blame,—we have all hitherto conspired against *her*,—and great and lasting will be our remorse!"

"Would she admit me," faltered Zeriny; "might I be permitted to look upon her?"

"Her mind is already wandering,—I doubt whether she has recollection left to recall the features which were once so dear to her;—thou canst follow me to the adjoining chamber, where

thou mayst hear the effect of thy request.—But canst thou bear the trial,—hast thou fortitude, Cassian, to listen to her voice?"

"I have—I have," he murmured, following the guidance of the Princess, and sinking into a chair beside the door of Iölina's chamber. In another moment he heard the light step of Sidonia approach her couch, and gently breathe his name to the sufferer.

"Cassian is here," said she, "thine own old faithful friend."

"*Faithful!*" repeated a hollow voice, whose accents thrilled to his very heart.

"He hath brought us good tidings, sweet sister,—renewed hopes."

"Cassian Zeriny was the first who wrought me earthly sorrow," said the same faint accents, "it is not unfitting that he should be the herald of my consolation. Yet what will it avail,—the hand of death, Sidonia, is heavy on my heart!"

"Not so, beloved!" replied the Princess, her own heart sinking within her as she looked upon the countenance of the dying woman. "Not so,

my dear — dear Ina! This night the head of thy Emerich shall be pillowed there, and dispel the icy charm which so distresseth thee."

"My sister!—this night my child may not abide with *me*,—but with *him* shall my enfranchised spirit linger. If God will, my soul shall be with him, Sidonia, and find its first beatitude in that blessed re-union. Draw near, Sidonia!—bright dreams, bright hopes are around me. If this be death, there is no terror in the hour. The beloved of my youth are with me now,—the lost,—the dead;—and promise me better faith than the living have kept with my heart. My father, my grey-headed father,—the good Mariska,—beckon me from this gloomy, shadowy region. None that I love are missing but my child. Saidst thou not, Sidonia, that my cousin Cassian,—ay, and thou didst say my *faithful* Cassian,—would bring him to my arms?"

Baron Zeriny was unable longer to endure the torture of his position. He rushed from the house,—and consumed the lingering day in restless and insupportable anguish of spirit. At

length, just as the latest bell of the city had tolled midnight, he presented himself once more at the portal of St. Francis; and looking up to the illuminated Calvary which stands fast by, he breathed a prayer for intercession to the suffering Mother who, in her agony, hath found a plea of mercy towards mankind.

He was admitted without delay into the darkened chapel of St. Francis, whose echoing nave gave back his hurried footsteps with an awful sound.—All was silent around him, and chill, and solemn, while the signet of the Primas was borne anew to the Superior as the evidence of his mission. At last, as impatience began to overpower him, a faint glimmering light became discernible in the aisle which unites the convent with its church, and he could plainly see the advancing figure of a monk of the order, bearing in his arms a child,—unto whom the white robes of noviciate imparted something of a holy grace.

"Whither wouldst thou bear me, good father?" said the gentle voice of the young Emerich. "Thou hast torn me from my midnight sleep,

and the last time I endured that violence, 'twas the foreshewing of a grievous sorrow! But I have no mother to lose now,—no kind, loving mother to forsake," said he, "therefore rule me as ye will."

The tears gathered in his large melancholy eyes as he breathed these mournful words; and in another moment he was placed in the arms of Cassian.

And it was Iölina's child whose head hid itself on his shoulder,—whose long glossy curls hung drooping upon his bosom;—it was the son of his beloved whose warm cheek, wet with tears, was fondly pressed to his lip,—and whom he falteringly but very tenderly addressed:

"I am thy mother's friend,—her kinsman, Emerich!" said he. "Wilt thou not go with me?"

"That will I, and willingly,—so thou wilt bear me to her."

"'Tis to that end I am here."

"And shall I see my mother, kind stranger? and will she kiss and bless me as she did of old?

now,—this night,—this very hour?—Oh! go,—let us go," said the eager child; and in a moment they were in the carriage;—in another, at the archway of his mother's dwelling; and there, beside the lofty gate, rested the consecrated canopy beneath which the holy elements of the last sacrament are conveyed to the dying Catholic.—

Zeriny rushed up the deserted marble stair,—and hastily traversed the gloomy saloon.

"Hush!" said a voice in the ante-room, as, still bearing the boy within his arms, he passed onwards to the chamber of death. "The last rites are celebrating within."

"Hush!" repeated other and more familiar accents,—even those of Sidonia and Katalin,—as his hurried footsteps brought him within the precincts of the expiring mother's chamber.

The bright tapers borne by the ministers of her faith were around that lowly couch, and their exhortations were solemnly breathed into her ears;—it would seem that they were received with hope and gratitude, for there was no longer a

trace of despair upon Iölina's cold death-dewed face. And when her failing sight, attracted by the confusion of his sudden entrance, rested upon Zeriny and her son,—a smile, a smile such as words were feeble to portray,—brightened her countenance.

"My child!—Cassian!"—said her faint, soft voice.

The words passed with a sigh from between her parted lips, nor did they ever close again;—the gentle spirit had fled with that last effort of its withered frame. But the smile of maternal love had impressed itself eternally upon the marble face of death;—and the fixed and soulless eyes of Iölina rested in mournful vacancy upon the precious object by which it had been excited!

"My mother! speak again," said the unconscious boy, again and again embracing her. "I am come back to thee, mother,—speak to me,—look not so coldly upon me;—press my little hand in token that thou lovest me still,—my mother,—my dear mother!"

Sidonia rose from her knees,—for Cassian was

utterly incapable of thought or action;—and gently disengaged the arms of the child from the passive neck which they encircled.

"This is hard to be borne," said she, scarce conscious that she spoke, and bending down to close the glassy eyes of the dead. "Heaven send us that peace to which we have resigned her! My sweet Emerich,—my poor boy,—thy mother's cares are over!"

At these words, Zeriny let fall upon the motionless sheet, the marble hand which he was pressing to his lips,—to his heart; and struck by a sudden consciousness of duty to her he had lost, he took the struggling boy tenderly into his arms, and stifling his sobs in his bosom, removed him from the chamber.

CHAPTER XX.

Passion hath no embrace so fond, so fervent,
As that where Hatred grapples with his foe.

MARLOWE.

LITTLE remains to be told of the surviving friends or enemies of the unfortunate Iölina Lingotski; but that little is far from unimportant.

She had herself appointed her place of sepulture;—a rocky point in the ancient cemetery of Buda, fast by the spot which had received the remains of the good Mariska. "I am rejected by my husband and my kindred," said the touching letter which bore this last request. "Lay me therefore where the free air and the cheering sun-shine may visit my lonely grave,—for it will be otherwise isolated and neglected."

In consequence of the act of separation which had been signed by Count Lingotski, the task of seeing this desire fulfilled, and of depositing her head in the tomb, devolved to her nearest kinsman: and Cassian Zeriny, who had so long neglected his duty towards her in her living hours, discharged it more faithfully and more fondly unto the dead.

"She hath become mine again," murmured he, as he led the gloomy procession;—"mine, mine alone, art thou in death, dear Iölina! and I will mark my gratitude, even for thine involuntary return."

Following her injunctions, the tomb of the Countess was hollowed in the *breccia*, on that beautiful eminence which commands a view over the blue waters of the Danube, and the white walls of Pesth which glass themselves therein; and there is not upon the earth's surface a spot more cheerful, more sunny, more smiling in its prospects, than that where Cassian hath raised the stately mausoleum of his beloved. Vineyards encompass the walls of that burial ground, and

the earliest garlands of the spring are culled from the surrounding heights; but nor flowers, nor prospects, nor sunshine, form the fairest ornament of the martyr's resting place. Within a temple of the purest white marble, stands a sarcophagus, on which is solely inscribed the name of "*Iölina.*" Beside it, recline two gracefully sculptured figures,—master-works of Daneker,—which fitly characterize the destinies they seem to mourn;—*Piety and Patience!* This tranquil mansion of the dead is not open to the intrusion of vulgar curiosity; since its completion the key has been deposited with Baron Zeriny, who is said to have permitted no day to pass without devoting some hours to affliction and solitude, beneath its hallowed roof.

Nor was the grief of the amiable Sidonia less vehement or less lasting; but respect for the name of an unblemished ancestry restrained her from breathing her indignation against Lingotski so loudly as Cassian, or as the general voice of the city. On the return of General Howard from the army after the first peace, their union was unos-

tentatiously celebrated; and although she would not wholly abandon a country to which she was bound by the interests of the prince her son, she hastened to fix her abode in England, where the remembrance of former enjoyment, and the prejudices of her husband, alike attached her choice. She was not however, as she had feared, re-united to her brother by this movement; Count Lingotski had already returned to Hungary.

Many who knew him well, predicted that upon his arrival in his native land, he would never open his arms or his affection to his little son; but Sidonia, who knew him best, foretold that Emerich would prove to be the magnet which had attracted him to the country he had abjured;—and the event verified her opinion. Sigmond Lingotski returned indeed to his fatherland, in many respects an altered man. Experience had recently taught him some of those lessons, painful though profitable, which are only to be derived from its harsh schooling;—he had learned to estimate the nature of worldly friendships and purchased homage; and to turn with warmer con-

fidence to the ties of nature and consanguinity. His intimacy with Courval had been ended by discoveries sufficiently mortifying to his vanity; and shortly after their rupture, Harák the Armenian had forsaken his protection in order to seek that of the Chevalièr. Nor was the detection of this double perfidy effective only in exciting his scorn and indignation: in the course of the feud to which it gave rise, Count Lingotski had occasion to learn from the hints of his domestics and other inferences, the base part played by the Chevalier de Courval in fomenting his domestic troubles; and he hesitated not to take such revenge as might beseem his position in the world, for both offences;—the faithful friend was left to cultivate the virtue of penitence in the leisure afforded by a severe wound.

But a still more bitter infliction attended Lingotski's enlightenment of mind. Scarcely had he been assailed by these perplexities, when the letters of the Palatine and of the Princess Betthyani, arrived to plead the cause of his afflicted wife, and to waken new interests in

his heart;—nor did he wilfully close it against their influence. He had already despatched a mandate to the Grand Prior of St. Francis, revoking his former instructions; and had even considered the possibility of returning to Hungary, and of knitting anew the holy ties which he had rent asunder, when a third letter,—far more interesting than the preceding ones,—came to check or to accelerate his movements. It was written by the dying hand of Iölina, and was accompanied by an intimation of her decease! The sacrifice which his pride had meditated was thus rendered abortive; and the injuries of his victim became irredressible.

The letter which was dictated in one of her latest days of sorrow and suffering, was characteristic of that heavenly gentleness of mind, which was her sweetest adornment. It bestowed pardon, even where it had been unsought;—it implored forgiveness where offence there had been none! But its true object was to obtain the grace and protection of the Count for his unoffending boy.

The appeal,—solemn as it was, had not been framed in vain. Of all the checks which had been administered to Lingotski's vain-glorious loftiness of spirit, this last intervention of a mightier hand than his own between his will and its purposes, was the most effective in subduing his arrogance, in softening his hardness of heart; and although he was still so swayed by his ruling passion, and its wayward blindness, as to look upon Cassian Zeriny as the primary source of all his mischances and afflictions, still the influence of Iölina's dying entreaties availed to determine his immediate return to Hungary, to insure the fond reception of young Emerich under his paternal roof; and to obtain for the child the best benefits of skill requisite to his condition,—the advantages of the kindest protection and an education fitting his rank. Nor were these changes the effect of a mere barren sense of duty. Lingotski loved the boy,—and even in the former violence prompted by desire of revenge against his wife, and by Courval's malicious interference, he had acted against the impulse of his secret

feelings. But now that he beheld in his helpless son all that remained to him of the beautiful and gifted being whom he had laid in an untimely grave,—now that he knew him to be his sole connecting tie with the human race,—the heir of his honours, the living soul from whom alone of all the earth he could command love or reverence,—his very egotism became the bond of his affection, which a thousand circumstances tended to enforce.

Improved strength and skilful aid had obliterated in his growth nearly all visible trace of Count Emerich's deformity; his countenance remained as ever, all loveliness and intelligence, while the singular resemblance it exhibited to his father was a yet stronger attraction in Lingotski's eyes. Still, in spite of his amended health and increased beauty, there was an air of prevailing melancholy expressed upon his youthful brow, which neither the unlimited indulgence of his father, nor the anxious efforts made for his diversion, could effectually dissipate. The boy had been so early familiarized with the sight of sorrow,—his personal ordeal of humiliation had

been so severe,—the affections of his little heart had been so roughly touched,—and more than all, the sight of his mother's deathbed had sunk so deeply into his memory,—that he gave his confidence but sparingly to his newly-found parent, and cheerful regard unto none beside. If the truth might have been told, he loved poor Szava and Katalin, who were now gratefully sheltered in Zeriny's dwelling, and whom he occasionally and by stealth contrived to visit, far better than all the flatterers or preceptors by whom he was now diligently surrounded.

It is not to be supposed that Count Lingotski, although respect and delicacy secured him from mention of his departed wife by those of his own condition who now thronged in friendly companionship to his palace at Buda, it is not to be supposed that he could close his ears or his observation against the public influence attained by Baron Zeriny, during his own long absence and still longer retirement. Wherever he turned his eyes, they were met by traces of the activity and liberality exhibited in Cassian's fosterage of the interests of his native country. Whatever plan or

enterprise was presented for his sanction and support, bore the previous recommendation of Zeriny's name;—whatever recent measure of legislative wisdom was recorded in his hearing, was sure to have been projected or made commendable through his means. The oldest,—the wisest,—the noblest—nay! even the Palatine himself, spake with honour of the judgment and the patriotic activity of the young Baron;—unconscious of the poison they were distilling into Lingotski's chalice, they failed not to dilate in his presence upon the supreme merits and general estimation boasted by the object of his secret abhorrence.

All the bitter rancour of Sigmond's evil nature appeared to concentrate itself in this one master-feeling of hatred. "He hath been the very curse of my destiny," said Lingotski in the solitary paroxysms of his secret fury. "Reptile though he be!—dust-crawling, and generated by the filthy slime of yonder commercial river,—his venom hath swollen itself into the importance of a hydra crest, and learned to rear itself success-

fully against my ease of mind. Through life — my planetary star,—the bright star of Lingotski's nativity,—hath quailed its beams under the noisome vapours generated by his evil influence. In love,—in pride,—in self-esteem,—in my country's honour,—he hath still crossed and thwarted me;—let him look to it!"

This darkened mood of a perverted mind had the effect, upon a single occasion, of exciting anew the fury of the Count against the innocent child who had now become the object of his doating idolatry. They were leaning one evening, side by side, against the parapet of the Lingotski palace, overlooking the world of waters beneath; when the Count in answer to the boy's exclamations of exulting admiration of the noble scene, cited with some scornful comment, the paltry meanness of the bridge of boats by which it is disfigured.

"But men say that even that single fault will be amended," replied the child; "and that my cousin Cassian, who so warmly and so wisely advocates the interests of Pesth, will,"—

"*Thy* cousin Cassian!" exclaimed Lingotski, starting from the side of the astonished boy. "Who taught *thee* to name that name?—Who bade thee claim kindred with the scum of a trading city and ignoble race? Who,—speak urchin,—who hath filled thine ears with a contamination which is abhorrent to thy father?"

The boy replied not,—but it was not terror impeded his utterance. "Answer me!" shouted Lingotski, his whole frame convulsed with rage, "or, by the crown of Hungary! I will throw thee from the parapet!"

"No! thou wilt not!" replied the undaunted child. "Thou wouldst not do me scathe or violence, father, for a higher bribe than holy St. Stephen's crown; and a dread of giving *thee* pain motived also my silence. But since thou needs must force an answer, it was *my mother!* it was my poor dead mother, who told me I had a friend and a bright example in my cousin Cassian."

Had it not been for this mention of a name which had long been as oil when poured upon

the waves of Lingotski's wrath, there was matter in the boy's spirited reply to have roused the very demon within his father's heart; but as it was, his first effort was to conceal his agitation from the young Emerich, and to stalk hastily away, with that impatience of gesture which foils or defies pursuit.

From that hour, his cup of bitterness appeared over-brimmed by the solitary drop of filial rebellion; and a sort of unquiet and unnatural restlessness animated the slightest movements of the Count. He took no sleep,—scarcely even food,—but he would ride with unmeaning and frightful speed for hours,—or for hours would pace in solitude, like a spirit of evil, his echoing marble hall. None dared oppose or remonstrate with him,—few even presumed to address him in these ferocious moods; but all unto whom his tokens of distemperature were apparent, foretold some horrible conclusion,—insanity,—suicide! But who might arrest the progress of the disorder?—who dared point his finger at the outbreaking plague-spot of a magnat?

Sometimes he would suddenly disappear from home, without a premonitory farewell to his son, and remain away for days;—none knew where or wherefore;—nor would he brook question or comment upon the subject. It unhappily chanced that one day, when he had been absent on one of these mysterious expeditions, Emerich, who usually profited by the confusion consequent upon his departure to seek his own measures of happiness or diversion, had escaped the notice of his preceptors, and departed from the palace. On his return homewards towards evening, he was startled by a sudden encounter with Count Lingotski, as he was about to enter the northern gate of the fortress. The boy turned very pale, and would have hurried away to avoid his father's recognition; but the Count looking wildly upon his agitated countenance, seized him with a determined grasp, and hoarsely demanded whence he came, and why alone? Emerich, still more overcome by the irritation of his father, entreated him to refrain from the inquiry. "I shall but anger thee," said the boy, "by my reply. Let us go hence, father, we have been waited for."

The recollection of the origin of his son's hesitation upon a former occasion, now recurred to Lingotski's mind, and with no soothing influence. "*Where* hast thou been, young sir," repeated he. "The question is plain, simple, honest;—see, as thou valuest thy life, that it be matched by thy reply."

"Father! I have been visiting my mother's grave."

Lingotski staggered as if a blow had been smitten upon his heart. "And where," said he in a concentrated voice, "where didst thou find that secluded dwelling,—and who taught thee to know it?"

"There is not a breathing soul of the city but knows the stately sepulchre erected by my cousin Cassian to her memory,—and shall her son neglect and desert her ashes? Yonder, on the heights of the cemetery are they entombed."

Count Lingotski replied not,—paused not;—although an ensanguined film appeared to darken his sight, he pressed onward with rushing steps, and reached the gates of the cemetery. A fair

temple of white marble immediately claimed his notice; and as he stood beside the grating which closed the entrance, the aged *bedral* in his gold-embroidered suit of sables, advanced to do the melancholy honours of the spot; expressing his regret that he could not open Countess Lingotski's tomb for the nearer examination of his visitor. "Had you been here, gracious sir, an hour ago, Baron Zeriny might perhaps have gratified the interest with which it appears to inspire you. He visits the temple daily, from the first of its completion;—they say indeed that such was the poor lady's deathbed request. See, sir,—if you look through the grating, you may perceive the garlands which scarce an hour agone the young Count Emerich and his noble kinsman hung upon the bier;—oftentimes they come here, hand in hand, to mark their homage to the dead."

The infuriated Lingotski, whose reason was now forsaking him, looked upon the old man with a glare of rage which might have terrified the life from out his heart; and stooping to pick up a fragment of granite which lay near the

spot, he uttered a sort of wild yell, rushed down the steep, and disappeared.

He was seen shortly afterwards, traversing the bridge with hasty strides, and approaching the hotel Zeriny. He was seen to put aside the Swiss who guarded the entrance, and to enter the house.

After a space of some minutes, he was again observed taking his way towards Buda: but his air was now composed, his eyes fixed with a vacant stare of insensibility, and his teeth set. On arriving at the palace, he threw himself into a carriage and departed alone for Szent Miklós.

Cassian Zeriny was found extended upon the floor of his library,—*dead!* Who gave the blow, or by what instrument it was effected, none could tell; it would seem that he had fallen without a struggle, smitten on the temple by some heavy missile. A most circumstantial detail of evidence appeared to point out Count Lingotski as the murderer; but the same constitutional law which rescues a magnat from undergoing the punishment of an ignominious death, also forbids his arrest

until his crime is proven in the course of a criminal process. Even from the sentence of arrest so obtained, he has the privilege of repeated appeals to higher courts; which frequently prolong the liberty of a noble malefactor for three years following the perpetration of some horrible crime. Before Count Lingotski's lingering season of legal grace had expired, he had perished by his own hand!

Emerich, at this moment an Imperial ward, has united by inheritance and bequest, the splendid fortunes of the houses of Lingotski and Zeriny; and inspired by the noble example of his young kinsman, Prince Betthyani,—the rising star of the hopes of Hungary,—he bids fair to emulate the virtues, and to do honour to the memory of—Iölina.

THE TZIGÁNY.

THE TZIGÁNY;

OR,

HUNGARIAN GIPSY.

The only freeman of your commonwealth;
Free above Scot-free; that observe no laws,
Obey no governor, use no religion
But what they draw from their own ancient custom.

BROME.

It was late in the autumn, and the labours of the day had ceased in the farm of István, a wealthy cultivator upon the lands of Gróf Schönvelt, at Mátrof, on the frontier of Sirmien. One by one, the numerous inhabitants of the rambling dwelling,—and the law of co-inheritance frequently unites several distinct families under the same roof,—one by one, all had retired to rest.

Even the last, the fairest, the most laborious, the most beloved of the extensive household,—Liska, the youngest daughter of the *hareschina*, or chief of the family, had knelt before old István for his nightly blessing, and had deposited her weary limbs upon the rude pallet which she shared with an elder sister. Erzsi was already buried in the heavy slumbers which relieve the weariness of labour; but her young companion, even had she proved "no plagues to keep her waking," would have been soon roused from her light rest by the sound of music under her window; which,—faint and low as it was,—was distinctly and painfully audible to poor Liska. She half arose to listen,—for the notes were familiar and precious to her ear. But the musician who had rendered them so had been long absent,—was still far—far away; and Liska's heart grew heavy with the remembrance.

Again the same plaintive strain was renewed; and again Liska started from her pillow. She knew the measure to be his own,—peculiarly his own,—for he was the popular bard of the district;

and when any wondered that István's daughter should have thrown away her affections upon an object so much beneath her pretensions, they acknowledged at the same time, that for ingenuity, courage, and personal gifts, not a youth of the district could match with *Sleko the gipsy*.

"The notes are his,—the voice his;—none other could agitate me thus. But can he be returned unknown to me?" thought the trembling girl. "Can he, for my sake, have ventured once more upon my father's ground?" Her doubts were not of long duration;—the following words, uttered in a mellow and distinct voice, proclaimed the safety and approach of the beloved; and Liska wept for joy as she listened to the rude measure.—

HUNGARIAN SERENADE.

I.

The hour is come!—Beneath the eaves
Bright hangs the maize in golden sheaves;
The brimming garners wait to pour
Their treasures on the threshing-floor;
The trampled vineyards, stript and lone,
Tell thee thine autumn tasks are done;—
Liska! awake,—dismiss thy fear,—
The loved one of thy heart is near,—
The hour is come!

II.

The hour is come!—Delay not thou;
Clouds have o'erpassed my wasting brow,
Labour hath worn my weary frame,
Absence my heart,—but 'tis the same,—
The same in Faith, in Hope, in Love,
To theo on earth—to Heaven, above.
Liska! the time is brief,—delay
Steals half our mortal joys away.
The hour is come!

During the concluding stanza of the song, Liska had risen silently from her sister's side, and had already replaced the dress of which she had divested herself with such different expectations, a few minutes before. She crept stealthily over the floor, lest a treacherous echo should betray even the light tread of her fairy footsteps to the sleeping household; and the creaking door of the chamber having for once yielded silently to her careful hand, she found herself in safety upon the external staircase of the house,—paused only to gird her shoes unto her feet, and stole down into the court below. In another minute Liska was clasped in the arms of one so dear,—so long and faithfully beloved,—that nothing less than a sense of his personal danger would have brought her back to immediate consciousness. A bright starlight rendered every object around them clearly visible, and Liska motioning to her lover to be silent, gently took his hand and led him cautiously and anxiously away from the house; breathing soft faint tokens to the watchdogs, who, at the sound

of her well-known voice, forbore more than a slight growl of disapprobation at her companion.

Carefully avoiding the open grounds, she conducted him through the plantations of mulberry trees by which the farm was surrounded; and having at length crossed the brawling stream by which they were skirted, and placed the overpowering security of its dam and noisy overshot between her voice and home, she paused under the shadow of the linden-trees, and once more throwing herself into the arms of her companion, she wept long, but not bitterly.

The stranger,—but why do I call him so?—he was no stranger to Liska,—Sleko then, the welcome wanderer, permitted her for some minutes to indulge in this relief of excessive emotion; but he grew impatient to look upon the fair face which for months past had been revealed to him in dreams alone; and gently disengaging her from his shoulder, he leaned back, and gazed upon her with the steadfast intensity of affection.

Liska had neglected, in her haste, to replace the habitual ornaments of her attire. Chain of

gold and jewelled bodkin were missing,—her tunic was loosely belted on,—and her hair was gathered unbraided round her head. With the innate coquetry of her sex, she blushed deeply as these disorders recurred to her mind; and the blush, and the smile by which it was succeeded, were in truth the ornaments that had been missed by Sleko in his ardent scrutiny; and Liska, from the expressive glow of his countenance, was satisfied that, in spite of her hasty toilet, she appeared in his eyes as lovely and as graceful as ever. She possessed indeed one of those picturesque forms which exceed the mere attraction of regular beauty. The movement of her arm, the turn of her head, were those of the most practised elegance; and as the two young lovers stood leaning on each other in the clear-obscure of midnight, they had more the air of masquers of high degree, who had assumed the peasant costume at their own good liking, than that of the station to which Providence had assigned their birth.

Sleko's garments however were but of the

coarsest woollen; which, after the fashion of the Slowak tribes,—were loose, square, and girded at the waist by a leathern belt; while his animated face was shaded by the broad, low-crowned hat which completes their costume. He threw it upon the ground, the better to contemplate that face which he had ventured so much to look upon; and the scattered locks of his jet-black hair covered his shoulders, while he hastily unbuckled his belt, and poured from it into the lap of Liska, who was now seated on the bank beside him, a number of ducats, which appeared to her inexperienced eye equal to the treasury of the empire, or the revenues of Eszterhazy.

"They are yours, Sleko?" she inquired in a tone of wonder.

"They are *ours*, dearest Liska! They have been won by severe labour,—late and early,—near and wide;—but *so* cheerfully, with such a good heart, that I have scarcely more pleasure, love! in now seeing them in your hands, than I had when the scorching sun beat fiercely on my head during my mid-day tasks,—or when my

weary feet refused to bear me homewards from my evening toil."

"But Sleko,—dear Sleko! even these, even all this industry, this perseverance, will not avail to accomplish our wishes. You know but too well my father's objections;—he is good and just, but proud also and severe"—

"And I am an outcast,—a poor, degraded Tzigány! I know it,—I feel it,—in every pulse of my warm heart!—I see in those tears, dearest Liska! But fear not thou; the patience which hath already won thus far towards success, will yet enable me to overcome my remaining difficulties. When your old father first became aware of our mutual attachment, he spurned me from him like a reptile;—upbraided me with the degradation of my tribe;—reviled me with my poverty, my race, my name;—nay! he even threatened to burn my poor mother's wretched cabin, and to drive our people from the country, if I relinquished not my hopes. I answered not, Liska!—trodden like a worm in the dust, you know I answered not; for from *his* hand my

father received the support of his dying days; *his* hand had doled out unto my widowed mother, the hard morsel which Sleko's arm was not yet strong enough to earn for her maintenance. Even the wages of my boyish labour were at length vouchsafed by his mercy; for none beside would grant employment to a Tzigány. Better had it been perhaps, if the feelings which taught me forbearance under his oppression, had previously prompted me to subdue the first consciousness of my dawning love towards his child."

"But that was so little your fault, Sleko! It was his,—it was mine,—any one's but yours. How often was he used to send me with your cruise and basket to the valleys, when you kept his herds between the hills; and what but my own childish predilection caused me to add the fairest fruits of my garden unto your frugal meal? What but my own wayward will caused me to loiter with you, hour after hour, among the lonely mountain paths? But it is useless now to talk of this;—from the first hour of your departure, my father appeared conscious

of having acted towards you with unmerited harshness. He has permitted me to continue to your mother those friendly offices which she had been accustomed to receive at our hands; and if my visits to her cabin were longer than usual, though he failed not to chide me at my return, he would seize the first opportunity of bestowing some undeserved commendation upon me. Often too, I was heavy-hearted, dearest Sleko; and would sit apart from the rest on our days of festivity; and when my father noted my grieving, he would come and loiter near me, and sometimes lay his trembling hand upon my head, as though in silent blessing!"

"He is a good father," replied Sleko, after a pause, "and a good man; but mis-proud, and narrow in his views, after the custom of the prosperous."

"And should he discover your return," whispered Liska despondingly, "and detect our renewed intercourse?"

"Fear not, dearest!" I come thus to his grounds under the shadow of night, only because the

morning light will find me far from these woodlands. Even now I have taken my last look at the old cabin, my last leave of my poor decrepid mother; and since I have learned from her own lips how kind, how thoughtful a daughter her old age hath found in Liska, I have felt no reluctance in asking her parting blessing. I bequeath her, love! to your affection;—for I am bound to Vienna,—I am about to join the army."

The young girl started in surprise and agony from his side, and for a moment her lips quivered and her eyes glistened. But she smiled again as she exclaimed, "no! Sleko, no,—you speak of this but to prove my courage. No,—oh! no,—this trial at least is spared me. You know," she added in a lower voice, "that the conscription does not extend to—to a Tzigány."

"I know full well," said Sleko sternly, "that the gipsy tribe, in which the Almighty hath classed me, is declared *infamous* by the law of man,—his creature. Outcasts from all Christian communities, we are hunted from your villages, excluded from the benefits of your laws and

institutions, and denied even the poor privilege of every other child of the dust,—that of honest labour. The rulers of Hungary have perpetuated in our unhappy race, the plunderer,—the rebel, —the assassin! and to us, the mere victims of laws which refuse us protection—"

"Dear Sleko! my own kind faithful friend," interrupted Liska, soothingly, "is it to me that you should speak thus?"

"I am wrong," he resumed, throwing back the locks from his high sun-burned forehead. "I am wrong; for already you know it as well, as painfully as myself. Listen therefore to my present projects. You remember, I am persuaded, the younger son of Count Schönvelt, who passed the hunting season at Mátrof some years ago?"

"Perfectly. You saved his life when, owing to a restive horse, he was nearly trampled to death in the heat of the *battue*."

"His Excellence would have it so. At least I proved my good-will and devotion to the family upon whose lands, Tzigány as I am, I was born and nurtured."

"Yet you would receive no recompense at his hands."

"On the contrary, I begged to transfer the fruits of his gratitude to my mother. Drechsler the intendant, fails not to visit and relieve her whenever he traverses the estate. It is true that the young Count was anxious to bestow upon me some personal mark of esteem; and I only entreated that I might be permitted to name and claim it at some future period. *That* period is now arrived, and I shall implore permission to serve in the Count's regiment."

"And why did you not, even then, prefer a request which can arise but from a desire to efface the ignominy of your birth?"

"I was penniless, Liska! I had scarcely garments to screen me from the air; and degraded as I am, I scorned to beg the means of reaching the army,—of temporary subsistence,—from one whose life I had preserved. But no sooner had the young Count left the valley of Mátrof, when I set forth to execute my old and favourite project of becoming a gold-washer on the banks of

the Aranjosk, or the Drave. I hardly know how I performed that journey, Liska; for I had no better means to support me on my road than the old *guzla** which lies by your side, and which my songs have rendered popular here in the valley; and I remember that when I arrived at my destination, I was gaunt as a wolf of the Krapaks,—meagre and wayworn,—halting with fatigue,—and ragged and wretched, even for a Tzigány.

"Judge therefore of my desperation when, after all my sufferings, I learned that to become a gold sand washer, I must purchase an Austrian license of the *Comitat*. I had not one *kreutzer* in the world! nor aught beside an exhausted body and two feeble hands."

Liska hid her tearful face in the bosom of the gipsy.

"I thought of home, Liska;—I thought of you, love,—to quiet the bitter torments of despair, —to assuage the cravings of thirst and hunger; and it needed all the ardour of an unconquerable

* *Guzla*, a Servian lute.

mind, and the remembrance of the vow I had sworn when driven from your father's door, to enable me to bear up against my aggravated calamities.

"At length I obtained employment as a herdsman; and during my service I found occasion to benefit my master, who possessed an extensive apiary, by instructing him in our gipsy art of attracting and dividing the swarms of wild bees which abound in that country, and of feeding them with the sap of the maple tree. The produce of the year was doubled; and on concluding his annual bargain with the *rosoglio** manufacturers, he voluntarily bestowed upon me the sum required for the purchase of my patent and the implements of my new trade.

"How proud was I, Liska! and how happy, the first day I took my station on the river and commenced my task! At first indeed I found myself an object of mistrust and envy among the established gold sand washers, but friendly offices and

* The celebrated *liqueurs* of Dantzig and Lemberg are sweetened with honey alone.

evident good-will soon won for me their better opinion. My gains were but slow in the beginning, for I was ignorant of my art; and experience only taught me to distinguish the heaviest sand, and to subtract its treasures with the least loss either of time or metal*. At length my eagerness rendered me expert; and as I was not blinded like the natives, by traditions and local prejudices, my trough grew heavier in a day than theirs in a week. It is true that being compelled to sell the *aranyos föveny*† at a fixed rate to the Imperial commissioners of excise, I scarcely obtained half its value; still, at the close of the last summer, I found myself the happy possessor of forty-seven golden ducats;—me, to whom as many kreutzers were formerly an object of envy! And here they are, Liska, for I have only dimi-

* The national museum contains a mass of native gold of the weight of sixteen ounces, which was subtracted from the sand of the Drave. The troughs of the washers are lined with an undressed sheepskin, in order to retain the gold. This ancient custom still prevails in the auriferous rivers of Colchis; and has been ascribed as the origin of the fable of the Golden Fleece.

† *Aranyos föveny*,—Hungarian, gold-sand.

nished my stock to purchase a *capût* of *Guba** for the poor old woman in the cabin, and this token for her ministering angel."

As he spoke, he took from his bosom a string of unpolished opals,† upon a golden wire,—as they are sold by the Transylvanian Jews,—and hung them round Liska's neck.

"But you must take back these gold pieces, Sleko," said Liska, after admiring the taste and generosity of her lover. "To me they are useless; and if you needs must venture upon this perilous quest, you will need their aid."

"I will accept all that I require," replied Sleko, "gathering together five ducats, and replacing them in the pouch of his belt. "A sixth, let us divide between us, love," he continued, bending a ducat until it broke in two. "Take it, Liska," and he gave one half into her hands, "take it, and keep it faithfully till your soldier's return. And should your ducat become

* A woollen tissue peculiar to Hungary, exactly resembling a lamb's skin.

† The opal mines at *Czewernitsa*, are the most ancient on record.

again entire, should you receive the remaining half,—remember it as a token that Sleko's hopes are buried with him in the grave."

There was a silence of some minutes between them, for the simplest rites are solemn unto the simple-minded. At last it was broken by the Tzigány who, rising as if with a convulsive effort, exclaimed that the parting hour was come, and that he must away. Long and fervently he strained the daughter of István to his bosom. He did not bid her be faithful,—he felt secure of her affection;—he did not bid her be kind to his deserted mother,—he knew the compassionate gentleness of her heart;—he only bade "God bless her!" and rushing through the linden-wood, he was out of sight before Liska recovered strength to look round.

The following morning, Liska was among the earliest astir about the farm. The ewes were milked, the lentiles seethed for the morning's repast, before the *hareschina* entered to give the blessing of the day; and when their meal was over, and each had gone forth to his appointed

toil, Liska, with a quiet step, followed the old man to the door of his silk store, where he was about to weigh and set apart the tribute due to the lord of the soil.

"Father!" said she, gently detaining him, "*edés atyam!** thou knowest that I have no secret thought hid from thee. Yesternight, Sleko the Tzigány returned into our country, and I met him in the woods that I might not risk to anger thee by harbouring him within thy gates. Reprove me, if thou wilt, that I have disobeyed thee in this thing;—but as surely as I will never consent to become the wife of another, so surely will I never wed with Sleko, unless sanctioned by my father's blessing."

István looked gravely, but not angrily, upon the child of his affections. "Thou hast done well to use this frankness, girl; for know that not even the duty of a child, can precede the tender vigilance of a father. This morning I marked the track of strange feet upon the white sand

* *Edés atyam*, dear father.

under thy window. I followed them beneath the mulberry-trees,—and I found smaller foot-prints, even thine own, beside them on the path. They led me over the stream into the woods, Liska, towards a bank where two persons had been recently seated; a broken lute was lying among the bushes, and this bag of gold beside the bank. Straight went I my way to the Tzigány's cabin, to restore his property and to admonish him;—for who else could thus have lured forth my child under the shadow of night? He was already gone, Liska; and his mother was weeping over his departure. She told me the history of his prosperous industry, and did not conceal his present views and undertaking. Judge then whether thou hast done wisely in dealing honestly with thy father."

Liska perceiving, with the tact of womanhood, that her parent was not displeased with what had occurred, neglected not the opportunity of enlarging upon the old gipsy's recital, to acquaint her father more particularly with the expectations of her lover. It is true he did not consider the

case in the same flattering point of view as his daughter, for the blood of three-score years ebbs languidly from the heart; but the sanguine girl was satisfied when he terminated his observations by saying, "Go to thy work, my child! go, nor let these idle hopes relax thy diligence in thy father's household. Sleko is a good lad,—a good son,—a husbandman who would do justice to István's lands, when István's last harvest hath been gathered. But he is a *Tzigány*, and till that blot be wiped away, the thing is impossible."

Gratified by her father's commendation of the beloved of her heart, and supported by the consciousness of a firm and mutual affection, Liska laboured cheerfully and actively through her accustomed tasks; and left with confidence the development of her destiny, to those mighty hands which had hitherto dealt mercifully with her submissive soul. She bore the sarcasms of her sisters upon midnight assignations, and the arch comments of her brothers upon the magnificent rosary, with gentleness and forbearance.

At all times reserved in her demeanour towards the young herdsmen who were assiduous in their courtship of István's handsome and handsomely portioned daughters, she now became more distant than ever. Notwithstanding her father's injunction, she considered herself solemnly betrothed to Sleko; and was frequently addressed in derision by the females of the family as "*Tzigány menyasgony!*" the gipsy bride.

Sometimes, indeed, when the lover of her elder sister brought his guitar on the summer evenings, and drew together the inhabitants of the farm, more by the variety and spirited character of his songs, than by the skill of his own performance,—Liska would exclaim involuntarily through her tears, "it was Sleko, Max, that taught you those verses,—it was Sleko, the best of our guzla players, who invented those measures."

"Yes truly!" would reply her sister Henríka, they *are* the Tzigány's songs indeed; and I marvel, Max, that you should demean *your* voice by breathing the words of *his*. Let me hear no more of the gipsy's songs, they have already sounded too often in my father's dwelling."

Under these mortifications, time passed heavily along. Since Sleko's departure the seed had been sown, had sprung up, ripened,—and fallen under the scythe. Another harvest was already yellow upon the plains,—but no tidings of the absent one had reached Mátrof. "Had he prospered—had he fallen? was he faithless—was he stretched as dust with the dust?" The forebodings of Liska's sanguine heart prompted a favourable reply to all such suggestions, and whispered, that it was well with the wanderer; and she resolved that until the fatal half of the ducat should reach her hands and reveal a darker destiny, she would trust in the ascendancy of that fortunate star which had hitherto furthered his undertakings.

A letter was a consolation of the absent of which indeed she never dreamed; and I doubt whether any such mysterious messenger had found its way to Mátrof, since its habitations of mud had arisen out of the soil on which they stood. Sleko and herself were equally guiltless of paper learning in all its branches. Their

wisdom—the best of wisdom,—was conned in the great book of nature, which lieth open to the interpretation of every eye;—their master, was that Almighty master of all, whose sermons are in trees, and whose records are written in the running brooks!

Thus reduced to the last resource of the unhappy,— a life of hope,— Liska was forced to subdue her heart into patience. She assisted to dress three succeeding sisters for their wedding feast; and was required in her turn to dismiss two rustic pretendants, who were anxious to see her adorned for her own. At length, in the commencement of the third year of Sleko's absence, the Végyázo, or Intendant of Count Schönvelt, on making his half-yearly visitation to the estate of Mátrof, for the purpose of receiving rents, levying fines, expelling unprofitable tenants, incarcerating insolvent ones,—and above all, of acting the "fantastic tricks of brief authority" over his subordinate,—the *rentmeister* or resident bailiff of the estate,—signified his pleasure that the inhabitants of the village should

assemble the following day in the hall of Count Schönvelt's castle. The "pleasure" of an Hungarian nobleman's steward,—nay, even of his deputy's deputy,—is as powerful as a warrant for high treason elsewhere; and there is no instance in which it is more frequently or more tyrannically exercised, than in that of assembling the tenants on every frivolous occasion, without regard to their loss of *time*,—the peasant's only revenue. Twenty-four blows with a heavy stick form the admonition of the unpunctual; and as the judge, or chief officer, is nominated by the appointment of the lord of the soil, there is little hope from an appeal to the local tribunal. The tables with iron clasps on which the punishment is inflicted, stand in the court-yard of every magnat. Such are the good effects resulting to the Hungarians from the merciful edict of Maria Theresa,—the *Urbarium*,—which, in emancipating them from the *glebæ adscriptio*, or state of villanage, is supposed to have conferred upon them the blessings of freedom.

Count Schönvelt, however, one of the most

excellent and enlightened men among the magnats of Hungary, exercised his rights only as far as reason and justice might admit;—and following the adage, "*tel maitre, tel valet,*"—his Végyázo had hitherto represented the dignity of his master's house with forbearance and discretion. His mysterious convocation of the states-general of Mátrof, however, occasioned a sort of preliminary diet among the elders of the village, to debate upon the motives of so unusual a measure. The *terroristes* predicted an increase of rent,—an arbitrary levy on the land;—the sanguine hinted at a remission, in consequence of a recent mortality among the herds, which they attributed to the imposition of a tax on salt, rendering it an unattainable preservative for the cattle. The discontented comforted themselves by prematurely grumbling, over the introduction of some new implement of husbandry upon the estate;—for the Count had the misfortune to be a distinguished member of an agricultural society, and had a *foible* for ploughs and harrows on scientific principles:—the young promised themselves a

festival,—the idle, a holiday,—and all and every one—an event!

The old castle of Schönvelt was rarely visited by its lords, except on the occasion of an annual *jagd*, or hunt, which took place on the estate; and at which, by virtue of the *vadaszat* clause of the Urbarial code, all the tenants on the property were compelled to give their gratuitous services during three days. The castle was grim, cold, damp, and dismantled! It would have been a treasure for a melo-drama,—but as a habitation for rational beings, it was dull,—fusty,—and dispiriting. Yet never did palace shine with brighter splendour to a courtier's eye, than did the castle of Schönvelt, with its bastions over-grown with wall-flowers, and its hall overhung with an economical tapestry of cobwebs, in the eyes of the Mátrofians. Schönbrunn,—Versailles,—Windsor,—were to them as the baseless fabric of a vision;—but Schloss Schönvelt—*the* castle,—their castle, had a substantial glory in their eyes. In times of old, their fathers had fought upon its parapets;—in the present day their sons had

followed its young lord to the field; and were even now active in defending their native country against the incursions of that mighty Captain, the terror of whose name was proved even in the retired valley of Mátrof.

Great, therefore, and silent was the reverence with which the vassals of Count Schönvelt obeyed the commands of his delegate, and ranged themselves in order under the gallery of the great hall; where they were graciously welcomed by Drechsler the steward, — an intelligent, worthy man, and a most devoted servitor to their master's house.

After looking attentively round the hall, to ascertain that those most interested in his communication were not absent, he informed them that the letter he held in his hands was *one* written from the army by their young lord, Count Moritz, who had greatly distinguished himself in command of the Imperial forces, in several recent actions. "It is by his Excellency's desire," observed Drechsler, "that I am about to acquaint you with its contents; for they regard one who was born, and has grown up

among you:"—the fathers of several young peasants who had enlisted in Count Moritz's regiment started forward involuntarily at these words, "and whose destiny," continued Drechsler, "cannot fail to interest many of you present here."

The letter was dated from Head Quarters, and ran as follows.—

"You are by this time aware, my dear father, that it has pleased God to crown the armies of his Imperial Majesty with victory; and that for the first time since the fatal day at Aspern, we are able to hold up our heads among the nations of Europe. The official despatches have already acquainted you with the details of the action; may it prove the first of so mighty a series of victories as may rescue our afflicted country from the rapacious hands of the invader!

"That I survive a day of such prolonged carnage, when so many of my brave companions, and especially so many of my faithful Schönvelters were left upon the field, is a blessing which, under God's will, I owe to a young Hungarian who joined my regiment upon the recommenda-

tion of my brother; and who has already amply repaid his protection. You are aware that my regiment had the honour of leading the attack upon the left wing of the French army, which although it terminated in success, appeared in the onset a desperate and doubtful measure; and was met by a momentary repulse. In the *mêlée* of our second advance, I had the misfortune to be surrounded and cut off; and a French lancer had aimed a deadly blow at my person,—for I was already dismounted,—when a soldier of the Austrian ranks interposed between us, at the moment of the retreat of the French cavalry.

"You may remember that some months ago, I acquainted you with a daring feat performed by a private of my regiment, in rescuing the staff of our colours,—all, alas! that remained of the Schönvelt banner,—from the hands of the enemy; and in carrying it triumphantly across the river under a heavy fire, at the retreat of Eldorf. He was promoted on the field of action, as far as his unfortunate circumstances would permit,—for he is a *Tsigány!* and it is the same

brave fellow, the same devoted adherent, who has added the preservation of my life to his former services. I lament to add that he has received a desperate wound; although, I trust, one which will not long deprive me of his cool head and steady hand.

"I have just visited my friend Sleko's bedside, and I am so fortunate as to have learned an occasion of gratifying his wishes. Already he has reaped a more important reward of his services;—for the Archduke Charles, under whose observation his former heroic act was performed, decorated him with his own hand with the *Tapferkeit* medal, and this public distinction was applauded by the cheers of the whole brigade."

The steward paused, and his astonished auditory gazed upon each other as though a miracle had been wrought before their eyes. "The *Tapferkeit's medaille!*—the Archduke!—my *friend* Sleko!" had they heard rightly?

"István Borsko!" resumed the man in office, with dignity, "is your youngest daughter present with you?"

The grey-headed man led forward Liska, even unto the front of the vassals; and when the steward looked earnestly upon her, she knelt down humbly upon the ground,—half in thankfulness to God,—half in expectation that some dreadful announcement was about to follow and qualify all this joyful intelligence. She did not tremble; but her face, her uplifted hands, her very lips were pale as the whitest marble!

"Rise up, Liska!" said the steward, affected by her emotion. "There is no sorrow in store for the betrothed of the first soldier of the Austrian ranks. Sleko's first thought in his good fortune was of his mother,—his next, was of yourself. I had received instructions to build for her use, a commodious dwelling-house upon the vacant farm of *Braunen*; to drain and plant the land at the cost of his Excellency the Count, and under the sanction of his Imperial Majesty's Hungarian Chancery, to endow her and her successors with the name, nobility, and rights thereunto appertaining. I find that Count Schönvelt's gracious intentions are, in this instance, unavail-

ing; and that the eyes of Sleko's mother have been closed in the fulness of age, by her son's betrothed wife. So far, Liska, thy duty is done. Let me fulfil mine, by transferring to thyself the title-deeds and lands of *Braunenfeld;* and see thou furnish the farm,—of which I have this morning laid the foundations,—as may best fit the wants of a weary veteran. Sleko will expect to find a warm fireside on his return."

Drechsler lifted a heavy bag from the table beside him, as he spoke; and placed it in the hands of Istvân. "Your daughter is too much overcome to care for my exhortations to-day," added he, as the tears began to steal down Liska's cold cheeks. "Take care of this, and of her; for she must live to complete the happiness of our young lord's beloved preserver."

I wish I could describe the altered tone of the gossips of Mátrof, after their first burst of amazement had subsided;—the envy of some,—the servility of others,—and the sincere and heartfelt sympathy of many. The national devotion of their attachment to their *Herrschaft* overcame

all remembrance of the dishonour of Sleko's early years. They even forgave him for having risen above themselves, above their children,—for had he not rescued the Hungarian banner from being trampled by the foot of the invader?—had he not preserved the life of a Schönvelt? For the first time they learned to name him as a *Mátrofer*, a title equal in their estimation to that of king of the Romans! Some now remembered that they had long predicted his rise,—some recorded feats of his boyish prowess, which had ever since lain dormant in the tomb of the Capulets. One boasted of having given him his first *guzla*,—another his first notion of military tactics;—all were anxious to catch some reflected portion of his fame;—his songs became more popular than ever,—and his future dwelling extended its wide wings and capacious granaries, without exciting one malicious comment.

And Liska,—what had she predicted of him that had not been fulfilled! what had she bestowed upon him that had not been returned a thousand fold! Yet she boasted not of her pro-

phetic skill,—she vaunted not her generosity; she only prayed the more fervently for the armies of the Emperor; and acknowledged more humbly, the power, the goodness, of their Almighty guardian. If she had any moments of exultation and gratified pride, it was when she heard herself pointed out among the *Mátroferinnen*, as "the betrothed of our hero;" or when the chorus of young labourers, returning through the twilight from the mountains, recalled the very words of Sleko—in the following

STANZAS.

I.

Donara's* waves roll stark and proud,—nor king nor kaiser's will,
Could turn them from their channel, or their stormy chafing still;
And the mind may be as firm, and the heart may be as strong,
To conquer tyrants, and resist the base oppressor's wrong.

II.

What's in our fate?—the firmament is spread o'er each and all;
And shines as brightly o'er us, let the great ones rise or fall;—
The sunny beams, the freshening rains, are dealt with equal hand
To the vassal in his cabin, and the Magnat of the land.

* The Danube.

III.

What's in our fate?—The hearts we love, which love us in return,
If belted by a zone of gold, could not more purely burn!
The friends we trust—the home we prize—could wear no brighter
charm,
If ermine mantled o'er the breast which such affections warm.

IV.

Then let contentment rule our lot, let Mátrof's children know
There are not happier lives than theirs, nor brighter vales below.
Hurra! for Schönvelt and our land!—our natal—good, and true,
Whose slightest wound from Austria's hand, proud Austria's heart
shall rue.

While the liege vassals of Count Schönvelt were thus warmly interested in the fortunes of his *günstling*, the pride and rejoicing of the little Tzigány settlement which spread its squalid cabins over an apportioned territory at the entrance of the valley, knew no bounds. Sleko was their own; born among them, cherished of their race. István Borsko had indeed somewhat

weaned his parents from the hereditary pursuits and vices of their tribe; he had even taught young Sleko those arts of peace which he had since renounced, and had in the first instance afforded him wherewithal to put his lessons into profitable practice. But in spite of this,—in spite of István, and still more, of István's handsome daughter,—Sleko was,—and must remain,—a *Tzigány!*—by birth—by lineage—by temperament. No landward born Hungarian,—nor Croat, or Slowak, could shew so athletic a frame; or boast of the white teeth which glittered like Bohemian pearls under Sleko's dark mustachios. No! Moritz von Schönvelt might make him a soldier,—the Emperor, an officer,—the *tekintetes Gróf*, a landed proprietor;—but nature *had made*, and must keep him,—a Tzigány!

All the projects for the amelioration and benefit of their afflicted tribe—the *Parias* of Hungary,—suggested by the enlightened mind of Joseph the second, and frustrated by his premature death, were once more revived by the acti-

vity of their sanguine expectations. A hero had risen up among them—a hero, a patriot, and a poet—and what might not the united power of these qualifications achieve for the wretched Tzigány race which called him friend and brother? They knew, to be sure, nothing of "swords with myrtles wreathed,"—Harmodius and Aristogiton were names unknown in Mátrof,—and they never guessed that one mighty nation of Europe is said to be governed by its *chansonniers*. Yet the power of the lyre rivalled that of the spear in their estimation; and following the all-powerful gipsy instinct, they expected as much from Sleko's music as from his valour.

Already each in prospect saw himself possessed of a roomy and commodious dwelling, like that erected for the *vilèz Sleko**,—with maize-fields and vineyards, and pastures white with flocks; and satisfied that their lucky fortunes were preparing by the operations of some invisible agency, the Tzigány turned contentedly to the

* *Vilez*—Hun., *hero.*

cultivation of their hereditary arts and sciences. Some to stretch their lazy limbs in the sun beside the entrances of their sand-scooped habitations, —some to the vagrant exercise of judicial astrology,—some to steal and disfigure the fair child of some distant household,—others to purloin objects of greater value although of inferior interest;—*all*, to lie,—to beg,—to vagabondise, —and to celebrate their obscene orgies over the carcase of the first dead cow, horse, or swine, ejected in disgust from the neighbouring village.

The half-yearly visit of the *Vegyázò* recurred as the house at "Soldier's Repose,"—so it was termed in the valley,—was completed; and the village was once more united to assist in the ceremony of planting a linden-tree on either side the door. "May your children's children enjoy their shade," was the universal salutation to the happy Liska, who was on that day installed in her mansion, and endowed with "all the lands, messuages, and tenements, standing upon and appertaining to the farm heretofore known by the name of Braunenfeld," and this by virtue of a

parchment bearing the great seal of Hungary! The plenishing,—the flocks and herds, and domestic furniture, were of course included in the act of donation; and the latter, although wisely and considerately simple, was of the richest fashion that had been yet seen in Mátrof. Some of the housewifely matrons of the village marvelled right earnestly that Liska should choose to disgrace the new *Mobiliarnachlass* presented by the Count, by the introduction of several articles of inferior workmanship into her chamber of dais. These consisted of an antique spinning wheel, with which Slekó's mother had been celebrated for producing the finest thread of the district, to barter with the Armenian pedlars;—of a rude, ill-fashioned, but very commodious arm-chair, the first which Slekó's handicraft had dedicated to his decrepid parent,—and of a fumigatory brazier for burning juniper-wood, which the young Tzigány had hammered out as an offering for the birthday of István's daughter, some ten years before.

The machinery of the little farm once set in

motion, all went well with it. István's experienced counsels were highly valuable to his daughter; and a young niece, the most active maiden of the country, lightened the drudgery of Liska's domestic labours. Winter came again, and still brought tidings of Sleko's advancement; and there were even rumours that he had received the tender of a high command and future nobility from a foreign but allied potentate, which he had declined in token of gratitude to the Emperor, and of attachment to the House of Schönvelt. It matters not whether fame had, in this instance, exaggerated his disinterestedness, for these were the last favourable tidings of the Tzigány which reached Mátrof.

Late upon a summer afternoon, Drechsler the steward arrived unexpectedly at the castle. He did not, as he was wont, proceed immediately to the high place of the village, to inquire into the well-doing of the chief vassals, and to distribute in turn the news of Pesth or Pressburg. On leaving the court-yard, he turned directly through the fields towards István's farm, without

noticing the salutations of those who officiously threw themselves in his way. Every one perceived that something was sorely amiss; and the more inquisitive of the idlers, who tarried for his coming forth from the house, heard the aged farmer exclaim as he accompanied Drechsler to the threshold, "I cannot,—no! I cannot.—I pray you, gentle sir, to spare me this sorrow."

The steward appeared agitated and irresolute, and for some minutes followed the course of the brook across the meadows, without selecting any direct path. At length, as from a sudden effort, he bent his footsteps towards "Soldier's Repose." He had taken his resolution.

"Liska!" said he, with a grave voice, as he entered the house, and found its young mistress busied in cheerful housewifery, "I grieve to be the bearer of most afflicting tidings. But I know your heart,—my gentle girl,—I know its courage. The Almighty, Liska, has vouchsafed a signal victory to the Austrian arms;—but it has been purchased with the blood of many of our best and bravest.--We have lost our friend—

dear Liska, but he died, as a soldier should, upon the field of victory. Count Moritz himself attended the last moments of his beloved preserver, and it was to *his* hands, ere he submitted to the amputation under which he expired, that Sleko intrusted this medal,—the badge of his military honours,—and this broken ducat, the pledge of his early affection. He bequeathed them both, with his dying blessing, to Liska Borsko; and to the church of Matrof, under the Imperial sanction, the French eagle, in the capture of which he received his mortal wound."

Liska took the medal into her hands;—spoke not,—wept not,—lamented not. She asked no questions,—breathed no repining,—all had been now unavailing! but retired into solitude and silence, and we will not lift the decent veil which should cover the loneliness of the bereaved.

She was changed, much changed, before she mingled again with the inhabitants of the valley,—oldened,—saddened. Her dress was black, but it did not exhibit any ostentatious symbols of mourning; for it was assumed for life. She

was pale, and wasted, and tremulous; and would willingly have avoided the crowd which had assembled round to testify their sympathy in her misfortune. She accepted, however, their condolences with gratitude, and listened patiently to their tedious exhortations. She felt, she knew, that despite her prayers, her hopes, her faith,—the beloved had been taken from her; and under so bitter a chastisement of the Divine hand, she bowed with the submission of a penitent, nor presumed to arraign the justice of the Almighty's severe dispensation. She even nerved her heart to visit the church where, by Count Schönvelt's directions, a plain but handsome monument had been erected to the memory of

SLEKO,

THE MATROIER:

A Hero

AND

A PATRIOT.

The French eagle, which had cost her so dear, was suspended above the tomb; and on the cold slab beneath did Liska kneel, and pray and weep for days and months, in the agony of a deeply-wounded spirit.

Time passed on; and at length peace restored the warriors of Austria to their families and fire-sides; and Count Moritz, who by the recent death of his father had succeeded to the honours of his house, was anxiously expected to visit the estates of Mátrof. His arrival at the castle was indeed frequently announced; but although the annual hunting parties took place as usual, and even although several Austrian and Hùngarian nobles assembled to enjoy the sport, their young host still remained absent. Among the numerous reasons assigned in the valley for his reluctance to visit Mátrof, was a want of courage to look upon the tomb and widow of one whom he had loved with an affection, and mourned with a constancy, rarely to be found among those of his nation and degree.

The surmises of the Mátrofers were shortly

ended by a declaration of war against the new ally of their Emperor. Scarcely had the shouts of enthusiasm subsided, which had celebrated the union of his best-loved daughter with his former enemy, when they were required to tear the young Archduchess from her throne, and to send forth her infant son into a perilous exile. The hatred of united Europe furthered their treachery against that sovereign whose alliance they had recently and basely courted;—a second peace followed the dethronement of Napoleon;—and this time, being the result of no hollow treaty, it proved permanent.

The swords of Germany being thus sheathed, and its laurels gathered, Count Schönvelt, about to retire into the seclusion of private life, became the husband of the fairest and most highly descended among the beauties of the court of Francis; and a few months after his union with the Countess Amalie, his bride, in the omnipotent caprice of loveliness, insisted upon passing a few weeks in his Hungarian territories.

Schönvelt had neither the power nor the wish

to dispute the will of his beautiful wife. In a few days, their train of carriages traversed the wild Hungarian wastes, which afford no rest for the weary eye, and scarcely a refuge for living thing; and as it entered the rocky defile leading to the beautiful valley of Mátrof, Amalie was weeping bitterly over her lord's touching narration of the destinies of Sleko the Tzigány, and of his betrothed bride. Absorbed in admiration of the Mátrofian hero, and of the feeling with which Schönvelt had dwelt upon his history, Amalie had thrown herself upon her husband's shoulder, and was scarcely sensible of the shouts which hailed her arrival on the confines of her new territories. She passed without notice under the rude arch of triumph, the construction of which had cost so much exertion of taste and toil to her vassals; and had nearly reached the entrance of the village, when she became aware that her carriage was surrounded by the whole population of the district. With the readiness of one to whom the art of *réprésentation* is familiar, she put forth her lovely face to be gazed upon, un-

mindful that it was still wetted with tears; and acknowledged with smiling and graceful affability, the adulatory shouts of the multitude.

"Yonder reverend white head is that of István Borsko, I am persuaded," exclaimed Amalie, beckoning the old man to approach, and the postilions to stop; and she leant graciously from the window to inquire after the welfare of his daughter Liska; naming her as "the betrothed of Schönvelt's brave preserver." The expression was enthusiastically repeated among the crowd; and cries of "may your Excellency live for ever! *vivat Amalia!*" rent the air.

The procession passed the enclosures of Liska's garden,—no one was visible: and on the eager inquiry of the young Countess, "is this Soldier's Repose?" the tumult of the crowd was subdued, and the answer reverentially low. The Count and Countess, who had already determined upon shewing a signal mark of regard towards their *protégeé,* descended from their gay equipage, and entered the dwelling-house of the farm.

Their visit was not long, but the whispers of the vassals noted that the Count appeared deeply affected, as they re-entered the carriage and drove towards the castle.

"I own I am disappointed in your heroine," said the volatile Amalie, as she rambled through the dismantled galleries of the castle on the following day. "I expected to find the victim of such a bereavement, the very image of despair;—so noble, so gallant a creature,—so devoted a lover—to have been torn from her in the prime of existence!"

"But remember, dearest Amalie, that ten years have elapsed since the death of my lamented friend and follower. Liska has numbered half the years allotted to mortal woman, and *all* those of romance. She is saddened into the reserved soberness of a matron,—is grave and gentle in her demeanour; and has gained the approval of her spiritual pastors, as well as the good will of the whole country, by her resignation to the divine will, and her diligent execution of the humble duties of her station."

"Still I should have expected to find her a wasted spectral creature, lost in the abstraction of hopeless grief. Indeed I am not sure that I approve of her being alive at all."

"Amalie!"

"Or I should have been satisfied to find her mad and musical, like the English poet's Ophelia."

"Hush! hush! giddy girl,—and let me hear your opinion of my steward, honest Drechsler's views upon Liska Borsko. You are aware that it fell to his lot to announce poor Sleko's honourable destiny; and he was so much better satisfied than yourself with the character of her grief, that he has been anxious ever since to make her his wife."

"And settle at 'Soldier's Repose?'"

"Exactly."

"Delightful! my dear Moritz; I have always been anxious to see an Hungarian wedding. Let us send for Liska, and break the matter to her at once."

"Why I have indeed half promised to plead

poor Drechsler's cause. He is an upright and worthy creature, and deserves no less at my hands."

Towards dusk, for she had swollen eyes to conceal, Liska obeyed the summons of her patron. As she entered the saloon, the Count desired the *jäger* who announced her, to place her a seat; but she remained standing.

"Liska!" said the young Countess, with more playfulness than delicacy, "are you aware that a good and faithful servant of ours is anxious to become your husband? and that in case of your assent, the Count is willing to double the grant of the lands of Braunenfeld, and to extend the gift to your's and Drechsler's children?"

Liska, who had not yet withdrawn her eyes from the ground, now raised them with something of a reproachful expression, and stepping forward, knelt down before the Count.

"I do beseech your Excellency to pardon me," said she, in a low but distinct tone; "I am but your servant,—your humble and devoted vassal;

—yet it were wickedness in me to suffer this thing without venturing to speak the feelings of my bosom. I have borne God's holy but severe judgment unrepiningly; I trust I have not left undone the duties of my life in order to indulge that affliction which has nevertheless preyed heavily,—very heavily here." She stretched her hand over her heart; and after bowing her head for some minutes in silence, she added, "Half of my pilgrimage, gracious sir, is happily accomplished; the remaining half will not appear so long, nor its labours so hard;—I have now nothing to resign unto Heaven, but the breath which it bestowed! But if you condemn me to become Drechsler's wife, how different will be my views,—how painful the tasks which your Excellency will impose upon my submission! I must learn to forget *him* then;—it would be a crime to think of Sleko,—to grieve over his fair promise,—my once bright prospects,—my cruel bereavement,—when perhaps the child of another man might be smiling in my face!

"Oh! no;—your Excellency who hath been

so gracious to us both, cannot intend that this unexpected grievance should fall upon me. Leave me," said Liska, clasping her hands with energy towards Schönvelt, "leave me the right to love Sleko,—to think of him every hour,—every minute,—and to look forward to no happiness save that of meeting him again, where everlasting peace may unite us. Leave me this precious privilege, gracious lord! and take back all your other gifts—they are poor in value to the memory of the lover of my youth."

"Fear not," replied the Count gently raising her, and imprinting a kiss upon her pale forehead. "Fear nothing, Liska! thou hast spoken but my own thoughts; I have done justice to Drechsler—shall I do less for thyself?"

Amalie who had joined her caresses to those of her husband, and her tears to those of his noble-minded vassal, now preferred a new request. "We have been but too lately acquainted, Liska! do not let us part again. You must live with us,—return with us to Vienna,—forsake this lonely place. I shall shortly become a mother, and I

anxiously desire that Schönvelt's heir may be guarded by the vigilance of so true a heart."

Liska's pale face was coloured even unto the roots of her hair, by this flattering and embarrassing command. Her steady presence of mind however did not desert her. She laid her hand gently upon the silken drapery of the Countess, and led her to the oriel window of the chamber.

The moon was already up; and under its brightness the beautiful *völgy* * of Mâtrof lay revealed like a picture. "It is indeed glorious —indeed beautiful," exclaimed Amalie, with her usual enthusiasm of expression.

Liska smiled. "To me, lady," whispered she, it is something *more*. I was born there,— have dwelt there. In infancy I shared with Sleko the haunts of yonder hills,—and in this valley where his name is loved, his memory revered,— nay, worshipped,—my pride and my affections receive their hourly tribute. Among the palaces of your city, lovely lady! there dwell many heroes; — in

* *Völgy*—Hung., *valley*.

Mátrof we have but one,—Sleko,—only Sleko! The songs of many minstrels are breathed by the Danube's banks,—here we know but those of Sleko! The Mátrofers love me, for I am all that remains to them of their hero;—but who would console me amid the crowded solitude of the city? I implore your Excellency to believe that the happiness you would confer on me, cannot be perfected except in this humble valley."

"She is right, Amalie!" said the Count, graciously and cordially dismissing the petitioner. "She shall live and die at Mátrof."

And when I visited Hungary, Amalie had not succeeded in persuading either lord or vassal to alter this determination.

THE TAVERNICUS.

THE TAVERNICUS.*

CHAPTER I.

Alas! there's far from coats of frieze
  To silk and satin gowns,—
But I doubt if God made like degrees
  'Twixt courtly hearts and clowns.

HOOD.

"IT does not matter a *kreuzer*, I tell you Johann Blaschka," said the worthy host of the *Blaue Igel*, the chief inn of the little village of Dorogh;—wiping as he spoke, with his apron, the waxed cloth cover of the table, and seating himself opposite to his taciturn friend and neighbour. "Verily it doth little good to discuss the business,—troop

* The Tavernicus, or President of the *Sedes Tavernicalis*, is one of the chief officers of the Hungarian treasury; and possesses considerable ministerial influence.

I will, and troop I must. Four thousand florins, —*four thousand!* Heard ever man of such a demand between Christian and Christian? *Four* thousand florins!" and he indignantly shoved aside the *chioppine* of wine which old Johann had insinuated towards him; and looked into the countenance of his friend, hoping that some token of sympathy might encourage him to proceed in his Jeremiad.

Johann Blaschka thus apostrophised, put forth as vehement a bodily exertion as his undemonstrative nature would permit. He puckered up his yellow-morocco cheeks, and then distending them to enforce a more than ordinarily voluminous puff of smoke, he gently removed his pipe from the left corner of his mouth to the right!

Mine host of the Dorogh *hostel*, who like other persons apt to wax prosy in personal details, had little need of whip or spur on his favourite course, was satisfied with this evidence of interest, and resumed his oration.

"Time was, Johann,—and a good time too,— that when the reverend Chapter of Gran thought

fit to raise the rent over an old tenant's head, they would speak of a score or so of florins; and if, in an extreme case, a cool hundred were in question, every tongue in the Comitatus was set a-wagging against priestly extortion. But now that my masters the Canons must amble on a pacing nag, and cut their bands from the most delicate Bohemian cambric, like a lady of the land,—*thousands*, neighbour Blaschka,—nothing less than thousands will serve their turn! Here am I now, who have toiled early and late these six and thirty years past, for the interests of this good hostel of the Blue Hedgehog;—I, who kept my wedding cheer in this same *speise-saal**, —I, who have seen my children born within these walls,—who know every beam and joist, nay, every nail of the old house, as if they were a part of my bodily substance,—here am I, about to be driven forth in my old age by the avarice and rapaciousness of the Chapter of Gran! Well do I remember that fifteen hundred florins covered

* The common eating-room of an inn.

the annual rent-fee, when my poor wife first brought the inn into repute by her hand at flavouring *schnitzel;* and as soon as our industry had set it going—*Pouf! two thousand* florins was the cry,—nothing under two. And after a dozen years had enlarged our family and straightened our means,—my Reverend Lords, hearing that the red wine was not spared in old Matthias's *speise-saal,* and that scarce a traveller of mark but tarried at Dorogh to prove the texture of his home-spun sheets, came peering hither with their cunning eyes and smooth courtesies, under pretence of bettering the stabling, and suiting the premises to my enlarged scale of business. And what was the result, neighbour, of this flight of ravenous ill-omened birds settling upon my roof-tree?"

Blaschka growled interrogatively.

"Why truly they found that their much-respected servant Matthias, was called upon to increase the revenues of the church out of his manifold profits, by paying *three* thousand florins for the rent of the Blue Hedgehog!"

Johann, whose pipe, maugre his dilatory husbanding, was now exhausted, took the opportunity of edging in a comment.

"I thought, Matthias, I had heard your late house-dame, of blessed memory, relate that the Chapter of Gran had just completed the new out-buildings of the farm, when they made their last demand."

"Tut,—tut!—Blaschka,—mere woman's gossip! A paltry hen-roost or so, they might have added,—a sty or a goose-pen perhaps,—nothing more. And even if it were so, what stone have they now laid, or what plank have they added, to justify their present demands? By righteous St. Stephen! who at the judgment-day will surely disown the pampered clergy of his kingdom,—I do verily believe, friend Blaschka, that were I to accede to-day to the demands of the Chapter, the Canons would come ambling back at Candlemas, and doffing their three-cornered hats to old Matthias, their '*lieber freund,*' bid him add another yearly thousand to the sum of their exactions. Heaven guard us from the

priesthood; and the priesthood from ungodly coveting of other men's goods, say I! Four thousand florins!"

"Master Matthias!" screamed a thin gritty voice from the other end of the *speise-saal*, "I pray of you to restrain these indecent revilings in company where they are not acceptable. It were unbecoming in the master sexton of Dorogh to hear uncourteous terms heaped upon a profession of which he claims to be a collateral member.—Soh!"

"Sexton Pál!" replied Matthias in a still louder voice than before, and waving his head aside through the circling smoke of the eternally-reeking *speise-saal*, to discover the person of the animacule by whose shrill tones he was incensed, "be pleased to note that this chamber is,—with submission to the Chapter,—at present my own; and I do not consider your nightly *seitel* of mead a fair purchase of my honest thought and free speech. Wherefore if my argument, man, pleasureth you not, take your professional self out of the Blue-Hedgehog at once and for all. For I

would say it again, Master Sexton,—ay! if the *Primas* himself stood behind your stool to back such peevish opposition,—that the clergy of Hungary are noted to be covetous,—oppressive,—partial"—

"My good friend," interrupted Johann in a tone of remonstrance.

"My dear father!" whispered a still more persuasive voice, "do not let the Chapter of Gran, or even Master Pál's officious interference, provoke you to speak irreverently of our good, our venerated *Primas!* Who so sensible of his humble piety, of his heartful fatherliness as yourself. Who loves him better,—or reverences him more truly? Nay! dear father, speak not harshly of our beloved *Primas.*"

"I was wrong child, and you are right, thus to stop my prating. And now thou art here, Suzsi, tarry and see the guests served, and the cellar-door watched, while I go forth to oversee the stabling of the kine. Franz is not yet returned from Gran;—the boy is loitering away an idle hour in the town, leaving me to shift

trenchers in his room. But look thou to his business, girl; and I will finish mine in the farm, while yonder buzzing, strutting, meddling mend-all, is finishing his meagre cheer. My house is poisoned while he breathes within it!"

Suzsi nodded obedience; and while old Matthias hobbled out of the *saal,* she turned towards the buffet and with a diligent hand began to polish the ancient spoons and cumbrous forks which Franz's absence had surrendered to her care.

Suzsi,—the heiress of the Blue-Hedgehog,—was one of the fairest, gentlest and most popular damsels in the county of Gran. The trimness of her well-turned figure derived a coquettish airiness from the dark Hungarian jacket, jingling with silver buttons, which was closely fitted to her slender waist; and her glossy hair was braided with a nicety and elegance which accounted for the absence of the knotted kerchief that ought to have completed her costume. Franz indeed had told her that those glistening locks must not be covered; and from Franz's

fiat there was no appeal. It is true he sometimes expressed a directly contrary opinion; but it was only when some young and handsome *herrschaft* descended from his *britschka* under the arcade of the Blue-Hedgehog; and on such occasions it was useless to note or heed the fanciful suggestions of his suffering spirit; for Franz, although a favoured and accepted lover, was, like the Moor of Shakspeare, "perplexed in the extreme" by the workings of his own jealous temper.

That he should venture to indulge in so aristocratic a passion was the more remarkable, as his station was that of a mere hireling,—a waiter to old Matthias; while the lady of his love united in her proper person the pretensions of a beauty and an heiress,—the heiress, not presumptive but apparent, to all the ancient, most domestic furniture of the *Blaue Igelische Gasthof*, as well as to several of the most reputed vineyards on the mountain of St. Matthew,—the best growth of the celebrated red wine of Buda.

The thrice padlocked cellar of old Matthias's

vineyard, was moreover said to conceal within its bank of sand certain weighty barrels, more strongly staved than any destined for vintage-service;—such, in short, as are hourly rolled into the Rothschilds' treasury. Whether however the contents were hard *thalers*, or doubloons, or even ducats,—these concealed fruits of his early industry made no difference in his views of the rights of the Gran Chapter. He had sworn never to pay an increased rent for his inn; and neither excommunication, nor confiscation, nor any other *ation* would have induced him to break his vow,—"An oath,—an oath,—he had an oath in Heaven!"

But in fairly acknowledging that worldly pelf occupied no small share of the sturdy Matthias's considerations, how must I account for the cordial sanction he had bestowed on Frank Westerman's courtship of pretty little Suzsi?

The fact was, that he cherished a passion strong enough to overpower even the love of gold; and that, in reiterating Shylock's cry of "my daughter,—my ducats," the emphasis still lay upon "*my daughter.*" Suzsi was the sole

survivor of a large family, which had not brought into the world sufficient strength of constitution to bear up against the feverish temperature of a double-casemented, double-stoved, and triply-populated Hungarian *speise-saal;*—like other forced plants, they had withered before they reached maturity; and the stock of paternal affection which Matthias had laid in for the benefit of eleven, was condensed, and appropriated, with all his other belongings, to his only remaining child. He literally doated upon Suzsi, whose kind heart, gentle bearing, and lovely person more than justified the excess of his partiality.

Now it happened that the dangers and molestations which beset the female department of *gasthofic* life, had never become apparent to old Matthias until the fair flower of his blighted garden had budded into maturity. His wife,—Heaven rest that housewifely soul, whose departure had given rest to all hereunto belonging!—was at once the most notable and least attractive dame in the parish; and even had the charms of her face, which was "bearded like a

pard," attracted the assiduities of Matthias's wine-bibbing, and therefore not clear-sighted customers, she had a tongue withal which might have put a regiment of bombadiers to flight; and being perpetual president of the culinary council, she was usually armed with a brass ladle,—as murderous an engine as a Slowak battle-axe.

The *wirth*, or host of the *Igel*, therefore, had lived secure from all apprehensions of conjugal weakness; and it was not till Suszi's graceful head had risen above the reach of his benedictory touch, that he had been disturbed by the certainty that she would see more, and be more seen among the *roisterers* of the *speise-saal*, than his paternal anxieties could endure to think of. Now there is no European country where matron fame is less carefully guarded than in Hungary; and none, I am persuaded, where the spotlessness of maiden reputation is more sacredly valued. Matthias was therefore both nationally and affectionately concerned in the maintenance of poor Suzzi's character; and the charge became in the end so painful to his anxious feelings, that, when he

discovered his handsome and intelligent and spirited *kellermeister*, Franz Westermann, to have won his daughter's affections by an unqualified surrender of his own, the old man felt perfectly satisfied to resign his treasure to the keeping of a more vigilant eye, and to the defence of a more powerful arm. He only required that their union should be deferred for six months, that the question of the Chapter's exorbitant demands might be previously decided.

All that either of the lovers could do to expedite the termination of the affair, had hitherto proved unavailing. The landlords were firm in uncompromising power; the obstinate tenant remained equally steady in his determination to quit; and on the day in question, Franz had obtained his master's permission to visit the neighbouring town of Gran, that he might bring back the definitive reply of the reverend Canons, to the tender he was commissioned to make in his master's name, for a renewal of the lease.

"I wish," observed Suzsi, who had now occupied herself for some minutes in polishing the

ponderous plate of the Blue-Hedgehog, " I truly wish, master Johann, that you would do your utmost towards persuading my father to accede to the proposals of the Chapter."

" How can he do that which would sear his conscience?" shrieked the little sexton, who had remained unobserved in his remote corner. " Are we not all aware that the tenant who gives four thousand florins rent for the Blue-Hedgehog, must toil and sweat, waste and want, and still lose by his bargain? The passage-boats on the Danube have wrested the wheels off fifty pack-wagons that used to pass along the road, from Buda into Austria. Dorogh is not what it was,—and the new suspension railway will still further diminish the traffic of the village; and who, I pray you, would give four thousand florins for an inn with failing custom?—Soh!"

" I thought you had gone forth, sexton Pál," answered Suzsi with some shew of dislike, " or I should not have consulted my old friend and godfather here on our family affairs."

Ur Pál, not a whit abashed by the rebuke,

continued his oration. "And even what your father hath amassed by his hostelry, Suzsi, he must have lost by his vineyards. Verily he is an obstinate soul;—I have never been able to persuade him to follow my experience in their cultivation; and while all his neighbours have been blessed with overflowing vintages which have rendered *Nessmühler* wine as plentiful as Danube water, *his* only have been scanty these three years past. *Nicht wahr, liebes kind?* So that Matthias,—already a falling man, would be utterly ruined by remaining in this inn at an advanced rent.—Soh!"

"Do not *liebes kind* me, master Paul;—I am a plain Hungarian girl, and wish to have as little connexion as possible with your half-Austrian blood, and whole-Austrian treachery. We are not ignorant that your brother is bidding against us; and that he has boasted of being able to possess himself both of the *Igel* inn and of Suzsi's hand, at his will and fancy. Now take notice that I defy him in both instances. Cunning never prospers."

Pál stretched his hand upwards to the peg on which his greasy sheep-skin *capote* was suspended; but touched by the remembrance that a premature return home would cause the expenditure of half a fagot and an inch of rushlight, he swallowed his indignation and his last mouthful of mead at the same time, and sat down again.

Suzsi despairing of his removal, now approached the table where old Blaschka was luxuriating over his thin potations; and leaning on the back of the chair her father had deserted, she recommenced her appeal to his friend.

"You may perceive how sore my father is becoming on the subject of the Chapter. But it is not when he is irritated, and speaks as he did to-night, that I am grieved for him, neighbour Johann; it is when I hear him moaning and lamenting the livelong night; and can even distinguish through the boarded partition, that he calls on my poor mother's name, and those of my brothers and sisters; telling them that he shall be driven forth in his old age to bide in a strange home, far from the grave-yard

of Dorogh!—Then what can I do but weep in my turn, and feel that I would give up every thing to induce him to comply with the terms of their reverences; or, dismissing all his cares, settle at once in the town of Buda, within sight of his own vineyards."

"While thou, Suzsi, with Franz for thy helpmeet, wouldst take his place at the *Blaue Igel*," observed her godfather reproachfully.

"Now Heaven forgive you for the thought," exclaimed Suzsi, blushing with indignation. "For well might you know,—*you*, friend Blaschka, who have watched me from my baby-days,—that even if the Palatine would make me a court lady, to flaunt in brocade at the palace, I would not leave my father alone in his grayheaded years. And why do I wish him to remain here, rather than retire to the city, but that Franz with his book learning, and his civil speech, and ready welcome to the gentry who frequent the inn, can do him better service than as a vintager; in which capacity all his scholarship would not render him stronger or more active than a common Slowak labourer."

"So—so," interrupted Blaschka, striving to deprecate her wrath, "I believe thee, girl,—I believe thee."

"Leave my father!"—continued poor Suzsi, almost in tears, "leave my dear kind old father,—no! not for the mines of Lipto,—not to be queen over Hungary!"

"Well spoken, and bravely felt," said a strange voice from beside the stove. And Johann and Suzsi, looking towards the spot, perceived that during their discourse, a stranger had entered the *saal;* a tall well-looking young man in a somewhat rusty riding cloak and cap.

"What is the *Gnädiger Herr's* pleasure?" said Suzsi, recovering the civil tone of her vocation, and going towards him. "Will you eat,—or do you choose a bed?"

"Eat? ay, like a cormorant,—and sleep afterwards like a marmot. I have ridden all day over your detestable roads, till every aching joint cries shame on the *comitatus.* Pray does it ever occur to the worthy inhabitants of Dorogh, that the masses of rock they scatter on the surface of

a ploughed field and dignify by the name of road, might break the neck of some unlucky traveller?"

Blaschka, whose Indian-rubber feelings were seldom overstretched except by a reproach against Hungarians in general, or Doroghians in particular, fixed his glassy projecting hare-like eyes upon the stranger, and twisted the limb which served him for a nose into a gigantic expression of contempt, as he replied; "The worthy inhabitants of Dorogh have little occasion to serve the whims and fancies of vagrants and strollers, whose incomings and outgoings are equally indifferent to them. We fare well, live happily, and under an indulgent lord, even the Primate of Hungary—and 'The crosier is an easy sceptre!'* Our corn-fields and maize-grounds give us bread,—young sir,—our hill-sides wine. What more we require, the Danube brings us at our bidding,—and why, I pray you, should we mend our roads that the vile

* German proverb: "*Man lebt gut unter dem Krummstab.*"

Austrians might be tempted to pour like locusts on our land, and waste its substance!"

"You say truly—descendant of the Vandals. But would not better roads enable you to convey your magnificent cattle, and the produce of your corn-fields and wine-gardens to a better market?"

"Your Emperor," answered Johann doggedly, for he had petulantly settled the stranger to be an Austrian, "takes care that his Hungarian subjects shall profit as little as possible by the fatness which God hath poured upon their land. Look to the exportation duties, the *dreysigstgefülle;* look to the tax which our wine, our herds, our meal, must pay for the privilege of being devoured in Vienna; and you will see that better roads form not the one thing wanting to extend our commerce. Bavaria may thrust her superfluities into the Austrian dominions, and be thanked for her pains; but poor Hungary may close the door of her overloaded granaries,—or make stove-wood of her wine-presses,—*their* produce is rejected by her oppressors. Mend the roads, quotha!—mend the Emperor's councils!

What! shall the poor Hungarian peasant be summoned from a distant home, with his wallet on his back, and his maize-pouch at his waist, to crush the stones of the earth with hammer and mallet, in order that the magnats who prey on his substance may be borne more smoothly from one idling-place to another? No! young sir,—no such German fashions for Hungary!"

"You have not chosen your *vesper brod*," said little Suzsi, anxious to terminate this warm debate.

"My choice depends on yours, *mädchen*; but I conclude you will arrange my supper on the usual Hungarian terms,—veal soup, with floating eggs, veal *schnitzel*, roast veal, stewed veal, boiled veal, fried veal."—

"We will do our best," said Suzsi, patiently, for she perceived she had to deal with an uneasy customer. "But perhaps you will prefer a fagot taken to your sleeping-room that you may sup there?"

"By no means; the society of this excellent old gentleman decides me to remain where I am."

So without further delay, or any encouragement from old Blaschka, he drew a chair, and established himself at the same table; while Suzsi proceeded to the kitchen to superintend his supper; and she had scarcely established herself among the bright kettles, and steaming tripods, when her father, who had been busied with the stranger's horse, entered the *saal* in time to establish peace between the belligerent parties.

"A good night and welcome! once more to you, fair sir," said he to his guest on entering, without noticing Blaschka's lowering countenance. "You are, I presume, a stranger in this country, —umph?—Perhaps from the Empire—umph?— Towards Turkey, probably—umph? The cabinet couriers have been somewhat slack of late— are you charged with despatches to the *Pforte*— U-m-p-h?"

The young stranger thus pertinaciously interrogated, replied—not indeed by Dr. Franklin's celebrated preliminary announcement to his Yankee questioners,—but by the final member of the sentence, "Bring me a boot-jack!"

Matthias, unused to the imperative mood even from the lips of his customers, instead of obeying the command, approached the tallow-candle which burned in rank exuberance upon the table before him, and plunging his fingers into the grease, began to apply it liberally to his long tawny mustachios; pointing and shaping them as it seemed him good, without further notice of the stranger.

"On my honour, you are a complaisant old gentleman," observed the young man, more diverted than displeased. "But since my request does not seem to meet with your approbation, will you,—having ended your 'toilet's greasy task,' condescend to bring me a flask of your very best wine, and a roll; lest I should famish while the calf is slaying for my supper."

Matthias departed readily on a profitable errand, and returned with more expedition than might have been expected; bearing a bottle of his favourite Ofener vintage,—bright as a ruby, and soft as *mandel-milch*.*

* Almond milk.

"You have brought but one goblet, old Trojan,—I shall require three."

"*Three!*" retorted Matthias, looking earnestly at the traveller to ascertain whether any Cerberian attributes announced him, like Mrs. Malaprop's definition, to be "three gentlemen in one;" when perceiving that the very handsome head upon his shoulders was a solitary one, he naturally concluded that the two bright glasses he now placed on the table, were destined for his own use, and that of Master Johann.

The young stranger filled them to the brim; then rose from his seat as he exclaimed "pledge me, friends, in a toast dear to us all. 'Hungaria! our native land! and may she learn to know her friends from her enemies!'" He waved his glass, drained its contents, then dashed it against an opposite wall. "Let it never be filled to a less noble cause," said he in reply to the inquiring looks of the elders; who having deliberately finished their own, replaced them quietly upon the table. Blaschka nodded to the *Wirth* as much as to say, "you have a pretty inmate to

deal withal—a precious scatter-brains!" Then turning to the stranger, he observed aloud, "so then after all your railing at our customs, and your abuse of our rough roads, you are yourself an Hungarian?"

"To the heart's core," replied the young man warmly; and I said that myself, which had a stranger uttered, he should have swallowed the words again at the point of my sword."

The withered elders smiled in gracious approval;—for there is no exaltation of spirit,—no degree of wild enthusiasm, nay, even no disgraceful excess, which an Hungarian does not consider justifiable in the cause of national pride. "But although my birthplace may excuse my vaunt," continued the stranger, "I will frankly acknowledge that Hungary is at present as little known to me as China or Mexico."

"We will fill another cup to your better acquaintance," said Matthias; and the proposal was accepted by the other two with hearty good-will.

"In spite of your friendly wishes, "observed

the young man, "methinks I am little likely to reach the heart of my unknown mother, if all the avenues prove as stony and repellent as that I have passed to-day. In Heaven's name what can induce the *comitat* to abandon these shameful tracks from year to year, although the established commerce of centuries should have secured a royal road from Buda to Vienna."

"We are poor, fair sir,—sadly poor."

"*Poor!*—with every richest gift of a bountiful Providence scattered over your lands? Is not the earth beneath your feet teeming with mines,—have not the gold, the silver, the opals and diamonds of Hungary procured her the name of the Peru of Europe? Have you not the best vineyards, the richest marble, the finest race of cattle in the world? Your very lands would task you with trifling toil, to pour forth their fruits twice in the year;—and there are districts lying waste—yielding only the thistle—and feeding but the marmot and the lizard, which might victual an army."

"We do not complain of the country, young

gentleman,—there lies not a finer under the light of the sun;—but it is with its masters and ours,—with the nobles and their Emperor that we have an account to settle. Were our harvests to be reaped *thrice* in the year, they were insufficient to balance our heavy taxation;—while the nobles,—the moths that fret our garments,—the idle drones that fatten on our undoing,—contribute not one thousandth fraction of a *kreuzer* towards the Imperial revenue. There was a time when the Bohemian merchants, or the speculators from Fiume and Trieste, would pour annually into our vineyards to compete for their produce. Who will come now, that a quadrupled duty will diminish their profits? or what will render back to our deteriorated cattle the strength and sleekness they have lost for want of salt? But our new day is dawning;—we have friends in the Diet now sitting at Pesth, who will see our wrongs redressed, or no more supplies for the Austrian troops!"

"Ay—ay," interrupted Blaschka, "the Emperor kept us forty years without a Diet to

regulate our laws, and control our controllers; and now he has once opened the sitting, let him close it when he can."

"Let him put a dam in the Danube!" retorted Matthias. "I have nothing worse to say of the Emperor than that I wish his public faith were as good as his private word; or that it were *his* word at all which governed our destinies; for had all his edicts been as just and as favourable to our interests as his personal choice of our new *Tavernicus,* we should have less reason to grumble."

"Verily, yea," said the Sexton's double-edged voice, roused by the energy of the disputants from a refreshing dose,—"Verily, the frogs have gotten the king they sought from Jupiter, and let them make the most of their wooden idol. They have imposed upon their sovereign a man who wants only courage to be a rebel, and years to be a traitor. Ragótski began but as Count E-ska"—

"Now hold thy scandalous breath, thou imp of evil!" said old Matthias, seizing the Sexton's

collar, and expelling him from the room, "for thou shalt not raise thy voice here, against the hope of our times. The *Tavernicus* is young, and as they tell in the country, wild and wayward;—but he has the blood of our best and bravest in his veins, and bids fair to do it honour;—therefore do we owe the Emperor a dutiful and thankful word for putting him in authority over us."

"At least," observed the young man, "let us not hope to settle those subjects of dispute, and redress those grievances, in an hour, which the Diet finds it difficult to conclude in twice as many years.—But you speak of poverty my worthy host, where no evidence of its existence appears."

"We suffered much during the war."

"I thought the French army penetrated no further than Comorrn?" *

"That indeed—and why?" said Matthias. "The old fortress kept them away. 'Come again to-morrow,' quoth she, 'for ye shall not

* Comorrn, the strongest fortress of Hungary, derives its name from a corruption of the German, *Com' morgen*, come to-morrow.

take me to-day. *Come to-morrow,'* -- but they did not accept the challenge."

"*You* speak of the French army, young man," said Blaschka — *we*, of the Austrians; who for our curse, were quartered two years on our land. *Who* spoiled our vineyards,— robbed our cellars, — insulted us, harassed us, pillaged us?—The Austrians — the Austrians — the Austrians!"—

"Ay!" shouted old Matthias, warming with energy till the grease distilled from his mustachio tips,—"and had we not our own people pouring in upon us at all hours, from all quarters; from Hochstrass,— from Raab,— fugitives before the French? In this very chamber, sir, slept one hundred and thirty officers for weeks together. My house was peopled from the cellar to the pigeon-loft;— all craving,— all eating, drinking, swearing, smoking, — every thing but paying! My poor wife melted away before the kitchen-fire, which was heaped and heaped through the day and through the night alike. But where was the pleasure of spicing broths for those who gave not even thanks in return?"

"Why truly," quoth Blaschka, "our poor countrymen who wandered in, with their household goods strapped to their backs, had some claims on us; and the distant roar of the cannon besieging Comorrn, spoke home to our hearts. Bome! bome! I think I hear them again -- overcoming the murmurs of discontent which then filled this very *speise-saal!* But what had the Austrians to look for at our hand, that *they* should claim free quarters,— break our bread, and drain our cup, without fee or payment? The pillagers! they came not to fight for the Hungarians, but to defend their master's kingdom."

"Or supposing," added Matthias, "that the French *had* prevailed -- what then? Theirs had been the gentler tyranny. Napoleon threatened us with no greater evils than an amended constitution, and a native and resident sovereign."

"He tendered the crown to Esterhazy," said Blaschka, respectfully raising his cap in honour of the name held dearest in Hungary; "and truly his Highness considered his allegiance to

the Emperor far before the interests of his native country, when he refused it. Would to Heaven he had thought otherwise!"

"But surely the Austrians did not proceed to acts of violence among their defenceless fellow-subjects?"

"I tell you, *Herr*, I dared not remove my wine into the capital of Gran, lest I should be waylaid and plundered by the white coats."

"Supper is served," said little Suzsi's silver voice, anxious to terminate this stormy discussion. "*Ich wünsche Sie einen guten appetit zu speisen*," followed of course as a salutation from all present, as the traveller seated himself beside a table more daintily spread than might have been expected. The tureen smoked auspiciously; — and a dish of the limbs of fowls delicately crumbed and fried, promised well, when flavoured with lemon juice, and the bright red native *paprika*,— an excellent substitute for the coarse pepper used in the empire. The bread was fresh and light,— an important point to those who have been condemned to feed upon the heavy

yellow loaves full of aniseed, and glazed with glue, which prevail in the Austrian states;*—and above all, a well-cobwebbed bottle of Matthias's *supernaculum* stood beside the pile of plates.

The stranger had scarcely seated himself before his repast, when a band of *zigeuner* who were passing through the village, having noticed the lights still burning in the *saal*, entered without further invitation, and established themselves in the back-ground, for the performance of one of their singular concerts. A dulcimer, two violins, a monochord and a bass were the instruments employed,—all of their own manufacture; and without the least knowledge of counterpoint, or of music as a science, they contrived to maintain a very decent degree of harmony; each in turn improvisating a variation upon the motive sustained by the others,—a very beautiful and characteristic national melody. On the conclusion

* The bread in Hungary derives a mouldy taste from the pits in which the corn is generally deposited. In many places it is trodden out by oxen or horses.

of their concerted piece, old Matthias, who was vain of his daughter's talents and sweet voice, desired one of the violinists to repeat alone the accompaniment of the same air; which he called upon Suzsi to sing in her best manner, for the entertainment of his guest. The young girl, unused to disobey, came forward without delay or affectation; and, save that she held the corner of her plaited apron for support and countenance, without any remarkable shew of timidity. Her voice was sweet and touching; and after breathing a prelude whose tripled notes closely resembled the call of a quail, she proceeded to sing the following

HYMN.

I.

What lowly voice repeats with plaintive wail,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!
So sings amid the corn the lowly quail,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!
There crouching in her loneliness,
Her feeble accents humbly bless
The Giver of the fields around.—
Oh! let me breathe the same soft sound,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!

II.

List! as the evening sun sinks low and dim,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!
The patient quail renews her vesper hymn,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!
Watching beside the turfen nest
Wherein her callow fledglings rest.
There as I bend my wandering feet
Let me her holy strain repeat—
Ama Deum,—ama Deum! *

Suzsi who, in the interest of her song, had lost the coy shyness arising from singing it to a stranger, had dropt the protecting corner of her apron, while she sweetly repeated the triple notes, which were modulated so as to imitate the quail-call with remarkable exactness; and stood with her right hand extended, her head bent forward, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, when Franz, having concluded his diplomatic labours, entered the *saal!*

The first object that met his inquiring eyes,

* I have heard this little song so modulated as to offer the closest imitation of the *wachtelschlag*, or quail-call, whose name it bears, in Germany;—I believe, however, it is of Italian origin.

was the handsome young stranger leaning back negligently in his chair,—his supper standing untouched before him on the table,—and his eyes fixed, with no equivocal expression of admiration, upon those of the heiress of the Blue-Hedgehog! Poor Franz felt an indescribable thrill through every vein, at the sight; and disdaining to hush the echo of his heavy footsteps in compliment to the singer, he stalked towards the table with the air of a *Bajazet*, twisting his mustachios with a demonstration of mental martyrdom which Kean might have envied.

The egotism of Matthias's heart warmed at the sight of his ambassador, and turning hastily from his guest, he demanded to know the issue of his negociations. "I am ready to acquaint you with every circumstance when all this accursed noise and scraping is over," replied Franz, peevishly, "and when the *fraulein* can spare time from her exertions to listen to so unimportant a communication."

"Silence—instantly—silence there!"—bawled honest Matthias to the astonished musicians.

"Drink a cup,—friends, and begone. I must not have junketing and fiddling here in my *speise-saal,* and the Friday morning so near at hand."—

The dulcimer player thus apostrophised, began patiently to strap up his instrument, while one of the younger musicians advanced with an extended cap towards the traveller; who appeared rather astonished at the peremptory manner in which, without reference to his inclinations, his diversion had been terminated. He tossed a ducat into the gipsy's hat, and was probably recalled to himself by the amazement depicted on the countenance of the *zigeuner.*

"Yes!" said the stranger, affecting to interpret the look, "change,—certainly;—a *zwanziger* for each of you, and bring me the rest in white money."

In the meanwhile, Franz, his master, and his master's daughter, had retired to the end of the chamber, and were engaged in earnest discourse; of which their guest could gather nothing but the exclamations of the old man—"*O, weh!*—

weh!—weh! Troop I will, and troop I must.—*O weh!—weh!* sorely shall I miss my old haunts—sorely shall I yearn for my early home,—*O weh!* But the blow is struck, and the hour;—and I must forth." While murmurs of regret and sympathy from his daughter filled up the pauses of his lamentation.

The traveller therefore directed his attention exclusively to his own wants; and as they had now journeyed through various courses towards the dessert, he sat emptying a case of Oedenbourg sweetmeats, and sipping a glass of *Tokayer,* till host or waiter, or Suzsi herself, might be pleased to return to their attendance. "A cup of *schwarz,** as hot as *paprika!*" at length he exclaimed in despair; directing his commands to Franz, as an excuse for amusing himself with a deliberate survey of his person. The waiter could not but obey,—it was his vocation;—but he "did his spiriting—*un*-gently," and strode out of the room with an energy which made his spurs ring again. The stranger took this oppor-

* Black coffee.

tunity to note that if the handmaiden of the *Igel* were sprightly, and graceful, and sweetly-voiced, —its waiter was nothing inferior in personal endowments. Franz was indeed a splendid looking creature,—melo-dramatic and picturesque—and highly national in his appearance; and the traveller interpreted without much difficulty, the air of affected unconcern with which Suzsi's soft footsteps followed him out of the *saal*.

A minute afterwards, however, she returned,—flushed and panting,—with surprise and indignation in her countenance; and the young traveller concluded from the alteration of her manner, that Franz was not only her lover, but jealous, and jealous probably of himself,—for old Blaschka had left the chamber at the first chord of the *zigeuner's* music. Now even those who are most painfully aware that jealousy is one of the bitterest drops polluting the cup of human happiness, have little reluctance in assisting to poison the chalice of another. The jealous meet with no compassion; —they are a privileged butt for the whips and scorns of the human kind;—victims,—like the

donky tribe, to hereditary persecution,—martyrs, like the clown of the pantomime, to the mirth-loving and mischievous;—and thus, in pursuance of time-honoured custom, the malicious guest, who had till now remarked in Suzsi, only a cunning compounder of *schnitzel*, a pretty animated *grisette*, and a very obedient daughter, began to pay her certain little attentions, which were hellebore and arsenic to poor Franz. He spoke his commands respecting the adjustment of his chamber in a whisper hard to be endured; and begged her to sweeten the coffee she had set before him, in a tone of gallantry such as had rarely been breathed before in the *Igelische Gasthof*; and which would have alarmed old Matthias himself, had he not previ 'y rushed into the village to breathe his tale of woes into his drowsy neighbour, Johann Blaschka's, sympathetic ears. He returned however to the *saal* just as Suzsi had taken the candle to light the stranger to his chamber; and after a cordial "*schlafen sie wohl, gnädiger Herr*," to the traveller, he seized Franz by the arm, and careless or unconscious of his

resistance, insisted upon dragging him through every several department of the farm, to exhibit the ability with which he had executed his delegated duties of the day; and to renew in each, his diffuse lamentations over the necessity of soon quitting them for ever!

Meanwhile Suzsi, with gracious good will, displayed to the strange guest her cares for his accommodation;—the snow-white and frilled sheet she had stretched over the hair-mattrass which formed his bed, and of which the black spikes shone lustrously through the linen;—while a ticking sack of loose feathers afforded the upper covering which replaces, in Hungarian economy, both quilt and blanket and eiderdown. Scarcely had she entered his chamber, when the young man threw aside his air of idle compliment, and looking upon her with the grave and friendly interest of a superior, exclaimed, "You have been weeping, *mädchen*, who has offended you? What can have grieved so good a girl,—so dutiful a daughter?"

The tears that had been standing in poor

Suzsi's eyes, poured down at this inquiry; but she answered not. Again and again, and still more kindly urged by the stranger, she replied, "Alas! *Herr*, my poor father is about to leave the dwelling which he hath looked on as his own these six-and-thirty years past. The oath he has sworn, never to increase his rent-fee, binds him to his determination, and the Chapter of Gran have already formed theirs;—this very evening my father hath commanded me to prepare for our removal to Buda!"

"And is this all, my poor child? Why 'tis a mercy to thee, Suzsi! Compare the mud huts of the village, and the boors who dwell therein, with the stately mansions of the city, and their polished inhabitants. Compare the waste of sloughs and miry tracks round Dorogh, with the *Stadt-Wäldchen* of Pesth,—with the gay sports of the *Margariten Insel*;—think of the merry meetings that will shorten thy long days,—the masked nights of the carnival which will prolong thy joyous nights,—and tell me not of thy desire to tarry in this desart."

"I pray you, gentle sir, speak not unto me of these things," answered Suzsi, modestly;- "they belong not to my degree. I have been so happy here, so beloved, that to leave Dorogh will grieve me no less than it doth my poor father.—And the stony ways of the city, will they repay me in the summer-season for the fresh fields and springing flowers,—for the acacia-trees which hang their blossoms over the thatched roofs of the village? The drums of the fortress will wake me on the Sabbath mornings, instead of the pealing of the organ, and the sweet sounds of promise which here reach us from the church that rises close beside our gate. My mother sleeps in the grave-yard,—*gnädiger Herr*, and my sisters and brothers lie fast by her side;—who will keep their graves clear from weeds, and the turf freshened during the summer heats, when Suzsi is gone?"—and she hid her face with her hands at the thought.

"My poor child! will nothing avail to alter thy father's determination?"

"Alas! nothing."

"And that of the Chapter?"

"Still less."

"Methinks," continued the stranger, half-aside, "I might do something with the reverend confraternity"—

"*Gnädiger Herr!*" exclaimed Suzsi, throwing herself upon her knees, "I know not how I should address you,—for sure I am that I speak to one of the noblest in our land. Your generosity to the *zigeuner*,—your table choiceness,—your air;—noble sir! pray you declare yourself to your poor servant!"

"Suzsi," said the young traveller, raising her from his feet, "I thought not in entering your dwelling to be tempted to throw aside my disguise; but the sentiments I have heard from your lips convince me that I may trust to your discretion. Know then that I am commissioned by his Imperial Majesty to bear his reply to the appeal of the Diet, now sitting at Pesth; and it is necessary that I should remain unknown, till I have prefaced my public duty by a private interview with the leading magnats. Therefore,

pretty Suzsi, I exact your solemn promise that till my return towards Vienna,—a fortnight, or possibly a month hence,—you will betray no suspicion of my real condition. Remember,—I must still be treated as a traveller of low degree and scanty means."

"But I am still ignorant"—faltered Suzsi—

"Of my name and rank;—true!—remember me then in your prayers as Alexis E-ska,—your Tavernicus of the Hungarian crown. Good night, good girl—let my coffee and my horse be ready at day-break."

Suzsi kissed the hand extended towards her, but still lingered.

"I see you have not courage to give voice to your wishes,—and it were needless. Rest happy Suzsi; I promise you that your father shall not leave the Blue-Hedgehog unless by his own desire. Trust the affair to my management, and once more, good night."

CHAPTER II.

Was ever woman in this humour wooed!

Richard the Third.

On the following day, many hours after their midnight guest had bestowed his parting salutations upon the blushing and conscious Suzsi, in presence of Matthias, and far worse, in presence of Matthias's secretary of state for the Home Department, — Franz Westermann,—the travelling carriage and *suite* of Count E-ska, the *Tavernicus*, passed through Dorogh.

As soon as the name of its patriotic and popular proprietor was borne into the high-place of the village upon the wings of rumour, or more plainly, upon "the most sweet breaths," of half a dozen withered mendicants, whose palsy, serpigo and rheum had entitled them to a begging

station at the gate of the post-house, a shout of acclamation was raised by the labourers who chanced at that moment to be enjoying their noontide suspension from toil; and a thousand noisy "*Vivats!*" urged the pace of the stumbling horses along the wretched road leading to the *Post-haus.*

The *caléche* halted under the gateway, and the *post-meister* flew to make out a certificate for so honoured a traveller; and while the postilions slung on their tasselled horns, and burnished their mustachios, a crowd of villagers, the most national perhaps, or possibly the most needy and rapacious, gathered round the carriage, in hopes that its leathern curtains might unclose, and discover the object of their enthusiasm. To hasten so desirable an event, they had recourse to all possible modes of invocation,—to all manner of soothing appeals. "Long live your Excellency, the representative of a bold and fair race!—God prosper your Highness's endeavours for the cause of Hungary! Heaven retain your lordship in his majesty's councils! *Vivat Tavernicus!*" &c.

For some time, these and such acclamations rent the air, subsiding at intervals into a flattering murmur of applause; but the hoarse and weary throng, observing that their efforts were crowned with indifferent success, united at length in a final yell of enthusiasm, which fairly roused the sole tenant of the *calîche* from his peaceful slumbers; and the visage of the Count Alexis's Swiss valet, lank, rueful, and unshorn, protruded itself from the vehicle, with a "*Blait-il mes pons amis? Qu'est ce q'uil y a bour fot' serfice?*"

The discomfited patriots in shaggy sheep-skin mantles, shook their larded locks with indignation, and were half disposed to resent with fierceness their own misapprehension. They retreated, however, with hasty strides from the scene of their mortification; while, as the carriages rolled on towards Buda, the upper house of Dorogh legislature,—consisting of Johann Blaschka,—Pál the sexton,—Oneski the post-master, and other worshipfuls of the village, who usually took their noon-day pipe under the linden trees that overspread the gateway of the latter, stared

after the departing equipage with almost equal indignation. The order of the day,—the decision, namely, of the Gran Chapter, and the *déménagement* of Matthias and his family,—was hastily discussed in order that the impatient oratory of the speakers might expend itself upon the inexplicable absence of the Tavernicus,—and the mysterious jargon of the animal he had delegated to represent him on the journey.

Meantime, scenes of most disastrous moment were passing in the adjoining *wirthshaus*. Matthias who, like many of his betters, "took misfortune as an affront," and knew no distinction between the feelings of anger and sorrow, had scarcely waited the early departure of his guest to issue contradictory edicts, and decrees innumerable, to the various members of his establishment. Intent upon exhibiting the earnestness of his resolution to depart, he seemed to consider that since the thing was inevitable, "'twere well it were done quickly;" and he therefore enforced with unwonted peevishness and vociferation the marshalling of his household. "Such marchings

and countermarchings,"—such opening of presses, —such rattling of crockery,—had rarely tasked the ears or the patience of his daughter. But it was neither her father's captiousness, nor the measure of her own labours which brought the tears into Suzsi's eyes, and rendered her still less capable of fulfilling her manifold duties with exactness.

In the course of her morning's toil, Franz had not only forborne his usual proffers of assistance, but when their respective occupations brought them together, he had averted his scowling brow, started from her touch as from that of the loathliest reptile, and finally had looked upon her with an expression of contempt which could not fail to penetrate into the innermost cells of a tender heart. He had remained silent and unaccusing it is true; but there was speech in his flashing eye more eloquent than verbal reviling,—there was an oratory in his curling lip, which words could not have rivalled! She resolved not to be grieved a second time by such a glance of disgust;—she felt ill-used, indignant, and turned heroically

away. But affection is omnipotent—and can control even pride;—and retracing her steps with tearful eyes, and tremulous voice, Suzsi addressed her petulant lover.

"Franz!" she began, "dearest Franz!" but the words choked her; and bursting into tears, she held out her hand in that pleading, humbled, deprecatory manner which love only can suggest, and which an obdurate heart can alone repulse. That of Franz Westermann was surely of the most adamantine texture; for instead of being touched by her sweet submission, he dashed away the pledge of peace with malignant violence, accompanying the action with a look and an epithet still harder to be endured.

Suzsi's spirit was now roused in its turn. She dried the tears upon her flushed cheeks, raised up her head like a flower after a storm; and if she did not threaten "the angry boy" with a deep and unavailing repentance, she secretly assigned him as bitter a portion of remorse and penitence as her gentle mind could image forth, before he might regain that love and that con-

fidence, against which he had sinned so cruelly. Poor Suzsi! She little knew that her power to punish had accompanied the gift of her whole heart; and that of all the slaves that crawl the earth, the woman who loves with fondness and intensity is, in truth, the most incapable of self-defence.

The evening came at length; and the disorganized family no longer gathered itself round the cheerful board in happy household union. Their accustomed guests feelingly forbore to break in upon old Matthias's first day of disturbance and mortification:—for the first time during thirty years, Johann Blaschka filled and emptied a solitary evening bowl in his own homestead, and even Ur Pál was shamed into screening his selfish exultation from Suzsi's notice, at the expense of logs and a light in his lonely dwelling.

The night, too, came; and the young lovers parted without salutation or word of grace; they, who had been wont to indulge in the "sweet sorrow" of good night as tenderly as ever did that enchanting pair, whose love is of all ages and

all nations. The morning dawned, and they met again,—still silently, and still coldly. The renewal of toil seemed to be only a signal for the renewal of discord or estrangement; and their mutual dissatisfaction became as evident to others as it was to themselves.

How darkly comes the first grievous cloud of suspicion over the fair heaven of youthful love!—With what profound disunion may a word,—a look,—an inference,—sever the ties of confiding affection,—those sweet and holy bonds which, of all human impulses, appear the worthiest of immortality. The peevishness of an idle hour will overcome the remembrance of years of untiring patience and exclusive devotion; and like the son of Thetis, Love himself is doomed to perish by a puerile wound, however bravely he may have resisted fiercer attacks,—however strong his buckler may have proved against a more heroic enemy.

Poor Suzsi was but the child of the landlord of a country inn; but so gently, so purely had run the current of her young existence,—so solely

devoted was her kind heart to the duties of a tender daughter and a Christian maiden, that her claims to commiseration appear to me nowise inferior to those of a more classic or more courtly heroine. The heart is of no degree; and I doubt, indeed, whether the one or the other could have been more sensible to the value of an honest man's warm affections, or could have drooped with more heart-stricken affliction under the evil interpretation of a wayward and jealous lover.—Hers was not a tearful sorrow; but it was deep, and tender, and overcoming.

Matthias, meanwhile, absorbed in selfish regrets, beheld in the mournful looks and unassured footsteps of his child, fitting indications of decent sympathy in his personal troubles; or at most, a natural expression of her own grief at leaving the haunts of her childhood, and the companions of her riper years. He never dreamed that there existed at that moment, sorrows on the earth that had not their origin in the avarice of the Canons of Gran; and, even had his mind been enlightened on the subject, he would have re-

garded the *brouillerie* of the irritated pair, as singularly ill-timed and disrespectful towards himself. He was unsparing of complaints and *doléances* in his conversations with his daughter; who, bound to secresy by the commands of the Tavernicus, presumed not to soothe his affliction by that balm of hope which her confidence in Count E-ska's power and will to serve her, had imparted to her own feelings. She dared neither suspend nor modify those preparations for departure, which she fondly trusted would prove unnecessary.

The days went laggingly along;—her very existence appeared to have acquired a new character. She began to think that it might be endurable to abandon Dorogh and its green pastures, since Dorogh could wear so dull and joyless a seeming. The house was full of discordant noises,—the air seemed to hang heavily upon her, when

> Like an unrighteous and unburied ghost,
> She wandered up and down those long arcades.

The paths of the village looked dusty and uninviting when her restless heart prompted her to

wander forth; and all the uses of this world seemed as flat and unprofitable to Suzsi, as they have done to every victim of discontent from the days of Hamlet until now. A thorn was in her heart;—a struggling pain haunted her parched throat,—the tears came quivering importunately over her eyes; and never more painfully than when striving to assume a tone of merriment with her father's guests, in the vain hope of disguising the secret anguish of her feelings.

If the wayward author of her affliction felt conscious of the change which every succeeding day wrought in poor Suzsi's hollow eyes and pale cheeks,—and with a due allowance for the proverbial blindness of love, I think he must have done so,—he considered any degree of suffering she might endure, to have been fairly earned: and he regarded her altered countenance with that intensity of gratified hatred, which belongs to the alternation of the fondest passion. He remembered the pride he had taken in her distinguishing and lavish affection; the fervour with which he had watched over her happiness;—the deep joy

with which he had recognised the superior purity of her mind; the hope,—the trust,—the ardour with which he had anticipated his marriage hours! —and shuddered as he contemplated his present frame of feeling. Alas! the miser believed himself to be despoiled of the treasure of his secret hoard; the fond confiding friend seemed greeted with ingratitude and betrayal—" there where he had garnered up his heart!" Was not this an excuse for his knitted brows and compressed lips?—an apology for the bitter torment he was inflicting upon her who loved him, as woman only loves, with equal pride and humility; with humility, in regard to the object beloved; with pride, in regard to the whole existing world beside?

" And this," thought Suzsi, as one afternoon, escaping from the turmoil of her home, she took her solitary way up the hill-side towards her father's vineyards, " this misery is all the fruit of a trifling concealment—of a single deviation from the ordinary frankness of my heart.—Strange! that I, who so utterly abhor deceit,—I, who would unbosom my own most secret thoughts

to Franz, should have been betrayed into participating in the mysteries of a stranger. Woe worth the night which tempted the noble Tavernicus to sojourn in our dwelling! for better had it been for my father to quit his inn,—better that our worldly prospects should have been blighted, —better that aught should have arisen, rather than that Franz should be abused with the thought of my unworthiness, and be tempted to treat me thus harshly. Till now, there existed not between us one single painful remembrance; there was not a cloud on the horizon of memory;—and now!"——Suzsi sat herself down on the stone steps of the vineyard, and sobbed bitterly.

It was the month of May; and the air came balmily through the swelling vine-sticks. The young shoots, of a pale downy green, were springing tenderly from the knotted stems of the vines, and gave a floating vapoury softness to the outline of the hills around; a cloud appeared to hover over the vast surface of the vine-gardens. Here and there, interplanted at regular intervals among the vines, appeared rows of peach-trees,

glowing with blushing blossoms; and cherries, with their leafless rods completely hidden by flowers of a bridal whiteness. The birds were wheeling through the soft air, as though it were a joy to float upon its buoyant sweetness; the butterflies were fluttering among the vines, as if waiting the unfolding of their honeyed bloom; and the cuckoo, that "winged voice," was heard from among the maple trees far in the valley below.

Suzsi was roused from her fit of despondency, as these and other sweet sounds of summer forced themselves upon her observation. It is so difficult to despair when Heaven's resplendent daylight is shining round us,—when Nature's lovely promise is bursting into reality beneath our eyes. The past, with its images of the lost, and the dead, and the estranged, is not with us then;—it is the future — the flattering future, bright with fitful dreams and fancies, which rules the hour. Despondency should hide its head in the dark stagnant dens of the city; — the hill-side hath a breeze which quickens the blood into action; the fragrant fields have a music of their own, which

overpowers the ominous croak of its augury. It is difficult, as I said before, to despair when nature's smile is reflected from the objects around us; and it could scarcely fall more brightly than under Suzsi's gaze, upon the rock on which the little fortress of Gran affected to frown in the distance, or upon the mountains which veil the course of the Danube beneath its walls. The whole landscape was unfolded before her, like a page of the choicest poetry.

The young Hungarian arose, cheered and comforted, from her deliberate perusal of its characters; and immediately bent her way towards the brow of the hill, where a small votive chapel, one of the numerous structures which gratitude or suppliant piety have erected among the vineyards, lifted its humble head above the trim vines. A low bench stood before the grating, that the country maiden might lay down her burthen, and breathe her simple prayers, during her brief repose. There daily, the aged labourer vails his bonnet as he passes;—there the child suspends its play to lift up its guiltless

hands;—and many a supplication is uttered before its humble shrine, and many a self-reviling confession is poured unto those bright heavens that are spread over its roof, which mightier fanes, and more hallowed altars could never have inspired.

Long did Suzsi kneel upon the springing grass before its gate; and patiently and sweetly did she smile when she rose from her orisons. As she turned towards her homeward path, a most unwelcome companion advanced to meet her. It was Ménesatz! the brother of Ur Pál the sexton;—he whom fame assigned as the future *wirth* of the *Blaue Igel*, and whom her own conscious disgust had long taught her to look upon as a presuming and distasteful suitor. Vexed at the untoward chance which had brought him thither at such an hour, Suzsi was well aware that the little manœuvres with which she had hitherto parried his attacks, must prove unavailing in this lonely interview. She could not, in the still seclusion of the vineyards, affect blindness or deafness, as she had been wont to

do in her father's clamorous dwelling. All her innocent *manége* of village coquetry was at fault;—Suzsi saw that it would be useless to gaze vacantly upon the dim distance, as if unconscious of the smiles that were bent upon her lovely face; or to hazard with affected unconcern a casual observation, when words of pressing and fervent courtship were ringing in her ears.

"You are well met, sweet one," said Ménesatz, joining her side with assiduity. "It is becoming a rare sight even to look upon you, Suzsi;—much more to be indulged in the happiness of a solitary ramble by your side. You saw me advancing towards you when you prolonged your walk. Is it not true, *kintsásó!**—say so, and bless me with the confession."

"So little true," replied Suzsi with indignation, "that had I dreamed of the possibility of meeting you, I would have"—

"Hush!—hush!—words of course,—a fitting shew of maidenly decorum. Trust me I can appreciate the delicacy of your reserve. Well—Suzsi,—it seems certain that your father will

* *Dearest.*

cede his post at the Hedgehog to some less worthy occupant?"

"To a worthier he could not."

"Umph! certainly—certainly. But it would appear, Suzsi, that the prospect of leaving old Dorogh is grievous to your feelings; you have lost all your fine bloom; your eyes are even now red with weeping. But cheer up and look for brighter days, sweet Suzsi;—even should the Chapter of Gran decide on accepting my tender, you shall *never* remove from the home you love. Nay! turn not away,—you cannot escape me. The occasion is a favourable one, and you shall hear all I have to say;—you shall know that notwithstanding my brilliant prospects, notwithstanding the favour with which my friend and patron Count Széchényi forwards my views, I am resolved, Suzsi, without further delay, to make you my wife. It is true, your village breeding will scarcely fit you to preside over such an establishment, or to do justice to such a style of business, as I intend to set on foot in Dorogh; but still, under *my* instructions,—my former

situation as *hofhausmeister* in the Count's family having of course sufficiently qualified me for the charge,—I do not despair of forming you to better things."

"Master Ménesatz," replied Suzsi, indignant at the tone of superiority he had assumed, and which so ill became a suitor, "I have still and ever prayed you to forbear such instances and declarations as these, seeing that they are altogether unwelcome and unavailing. When I leave Dorogh it will be to share my father's home, wheresoever it may be appointed."

"No, Suzsi, no!—you will think better of it, I am persuaded. You will not refuse to bless a heart that loves you, to preside as mistress in the home you cherish, to live and die in the village wherein you were born;—and this too for the sake of a beggarly waiter, who hath nothing to endow you withal, save his poverty and his irritable temper."

"Nothing?" replied Suzsi, in a voice of emotion. "*Nothing!* Is an honest heart nothing? Is a brave, upright, generous mind nothing?

Is it nothing to have gifted the poor with the hard-earned fruits of patient industry?—to have saved the life of an enemy at the peril of his own? Go—go!—those who rise by creeping,—who wax prosperous through cunning, and intrigue, and peculation, and the favour of the great, *are* nothing—less than nothing! But my good, frank, generous Franz may boast"——

"*Your* Franz!" retorted Ménesatz, livid with suppressed fury, "*yours*, maiden? Those who are *one* in heart and troth rarely look upon each other as Franz Westermann gazed upon yourself an hour ago, when together we noted your rambling footsteps from the valley yonder below."

"Franz saw me, then?"

"Ay! and saw *me* also depart on your track. I told him, archly enough, that the hill-top was a well chosen spot for love-whispers."

Suzsi wrung her hands. "And Franz, what said he in reply?"

"He laughed aloud; but not to my thinking for any pleasant thought that tickled his mind, for his brow the while was dark as the Krapaks

in a storm. 'No matter,' he said, ''tis no matter. Come one, come all. The wanton wind bloweth upon every one;—shall a wanton woman be less free?'—And so he bade me go and speed my wooing."

Suzsi shuddered as she listened! To be made a mock of,—to be exposed to ribald jests,—her weakness, if such it were, to be noted even unto a vain babbler like Ménesatz!—It was more than patience might endure.

"Ay, Suzsi," continued the wily one, pursuing his advantage, "this it is to be subjected to starts of passion, to be prompted by the suspicions of a fretful, jealous temper. A precious companion, in good sooth, were Master Westermann, with his ghastly scornful laugh, and his angry faltering voice, during the long days which make up the sum of life! Well—an easy heart and a peaceful hearth for me! Harsh words never yet straightened a woman's crooked paths; and a kind hand, and gentle speech may do much to lead the wanderer into a better track."

Suzsi felt that she had just then much need for

the soothing of a kind hand, and gentle speech; — but she said not a word.

"And your father, Suzsi, — how would he brook to be thwarted in the weariness of his age, by a fractious, contradictory temper? To be bearded on his own hearthstone, by one who hath taken hire at his hands? To behold his child,— the lamb of his flock,—harassed and evil-entreated by such a churl as Franz is like to become?— Then, if the world go but hardly for a season, if the vines should suffer from April hail, or the maize lack moisture to swell its sheaves, straight should we see Master Westermann with folded arms and leaden looks, bearing about his sullen despondency from hall to granary; spiting his customers for very moodiness, and rating his meek wife for the niggardliness of the skies. Give me a frank easy heart Suzsi, and a sanguine cheerful temper,—for blessed are they who inhabit therewith."

Suzsi was provoked to find in the insidious comments of her companion much that was unanswerably true; but she loved him not the

better for proving to her that she had fixed her affections imprudently;—few women can endure to be put in the wrong. She had determined from the first, that she would not enter the village in friendly companionship with one whom she so little affected as Ménesatz; as soon therefore as they came in sight of the smoke that curled in many wreaths above its budding acacias, she paused abruptly to inquire which path it was his pleasure to take, in order that she might select another.

Ménesatz expostulated with her upon this ungracious declaration; enforcing his remonstrances by taking her resisting hand within his own, and setting forth, with more explicit detail, the splendours about to accredit his temporal prosperity; and his earnest hope and intention of sharing them with herself—her beloved and lovely self.

"Master Ménesatz," replied Suzsi, withdrawing her hand from his pressure with more of self-command than was implied by her tremulous voice, "I could not fail to pity and appreciate

such sentiments, were I not persuaded that their existence mainly depends upon the amount of the sparings of my father's industry; and I should feel inclined to blame *myself* for the freedom of your present address, did I not well remember that from the first hour you came glozing and fawning to our home in Dorogh, I expressed my unequivocal opposition to your views. You spoke not indeed openly of your will towards me, nor named the name of love; but so far as you could infer your passion, without committing your prudence, you shewed me your intention,—and I acquainted *you* with mine. Nay, more;—to spare you the pain of hearing my plain opinion in plain words, I overstepped the reserve of a woman's heart, and told you that I loved another;—even though that other had not then sought me of my father."

"Do I deny it?" replied Ménesatz with varying colour, and concentrated voice. "Do I deny it!—you said you loved Franz Westermann, the hireling!—But will you, can you, Suzsi, say so *now?* Now that he hath thought you, ay—and

hath called you in the ears of men, that which I dare not repeat to your own?"

Suzsi started as though she had been stung by a venomous reptile. "He hath called me so?—hath spoken lightly of me?" said she, clasping her hands together; "may God forgive him! And can I say I love him still? I *can* say so,—I *do* say so. I love him tenderly,—truly,—against my judgment,—against my very will,—but still, with a changeless affection. Dreamest thou that the love of years can be rooted out in an hour,—that feelings which have engrossed my whole heart, my whole existence, can be blown away by a blast of angry breath? No, no!—if I knew that I should look on him no more,—if I knew that he had given heart and faith to another, I should say, as I say to thee now, that the love of my youth will be the love of my age; and that my duty shall be vowed to no other husband than him whose name for long, long years, I have presumed to join with my father's, in my nightly prayers unto the Almighty."

Suzsi's tears flowed fast and free as her decla-

ration ceased. Her mind was too much occupied by the images of past affection and present sorrow, to take much heed of its effect upon her mortified suitor. The first words she noticed from his lips were, "then shall the remembrance of this hour hang heavy upon your bosom, when you see his gray hairs laid in the grave. Pine as you list after your former home, grieve as you may,—you shall perish an alien, an exile, and an orphan."

During this stormy dialogue, Suzsi had unconsciously reached the high-place of the village by the side of the infuriated Ménesatz; who parted from her in presence of the little tribunal at the *Post-haus* gate, uttering the single and signal word, "Remember!"

As she entered the paved court of the *Blaue Igel*, her father himself met her by the way. "How now, mistress," said the old man peevishly. "Is this a time of day, or a day at all, to be wandering in the pastures with a gallant? Is it not enough, Suzsi, that thy father must toil here, and labour there, and find nor *hausknecht* nor

bauermädchen to do his bidding; but that thou, the daughter of his bosom, the blood of his heart's-blood, must prove a vain rebellious gad-thereout, and leave him shrieveless to his troubles? In, and shame thee, girl,—in!" said he with no gentle voice or action;—regardless of Suzsi's panting bodice and brimming eyes.

The poor girl would have spoken,—pleaded,—remonstrated,—had grief and surprise left her voice to defend herself. It seemed as if every degree of bitterness were to be mingled in her cup of tears. The misconstruction and ungenerous usage of a jealous lover,—the menaces of a malicious ruffian,—and the undeserved reproof of her angry father conspired to depress her spirit and overcome her resolution; when Franz himself, who had been an unseen and gratified auditor of Matthias's reprimand, officiously opened the door of the *speise-saal* to admit the seeming culprit. The evening was already closing, and Suzsi involuntarily raised her eyes as the candle-light from the interior of the chamber, fell upon his person. She actually started back with horror when she

perceived the alteration which two short weeks had wrought in his countenance. There was a sort of marble fixedness in his fine forehead, which rendered its unearthly paleness frightful to look upon; the curls hung matted on his temples, and his compressed lips and troubled eyes revealed the struggles of his mental anguish. It seemed as though he were suffering from the secret agency of some deathly disease, and in truth it was so;—for no disorder of a more agonizing tendency can rack the human frame, than the discovery of the utter worthlessness of a beloved object. Nor leech nor drug, nor time nor patience, have power to minister to such an ailment!

"And is it so?" murmured Suzsi as she retreated into the inner chamber appropriated to her use, pressing her hands upon her burning forehead. "Is it so in truth? Am I so estranged from all who loved me, that I dare not vindicate myself to my kind father,—that I may not venture to sue for Franz's pardon! But wherefore should I seek it? I who have never voluntarily offended? Yet altered as he is, he must

surely *believe* in my guilt;—caprice, or captious waywardness would never have changed him thus. Alas! alas! how long, how sadly must certainty have forced itself upon *my* mind, ere I had endured to condemn *him* as criminal and shameless. *Him*, for whom I would peril my life, and glory in the hazard!

"And still this mystery must endure,—still must I live in his thoughts as a lost and outcast wretch. Every day and every hour must *I* grow more miserable, and *he* more cruel and more wretched. No!—not if strength and courage may assist me," exclaimed Suzsi, rising from her oaken settle with sudden energy; and having braided her wandering hair, and adjusted her disordered garb, she resolutely re-entered the *saal*.

As she turned the creaking door upon its hinges, she felt disgusted for the first time during her life, by the rude sounds of hilarity which burst upon her ear.

Perhaps, however, the noisy drinking song which jarred so discordantly upon her anxious

feelings, acquired its chief demerits from the voice of Westermann which might be distinguished in the chorus.

The words, though rude, were little calculated to offend her—

TRINK LIED.

I.

Ay! put it round! to thee, to me,
To all!
The cup should circle fair and free,
And deep and clear its draught should be
For all!

II.

A health, as bright as summer hours,
To all!
May treasure fall in golden showers,
May pleasure prank her paths with flowers
For all!

III.

May labour lend his lightest load
To all;—
May quiet haunt each calm abode
Where love's best blessings are bestowed
On all!

IV.

Our prince!—not such as lords it now
O'er all,—
But he who last, with crowned brow,
In battle saw his life-blood flow
For all!

V.

Our land!—not scorned as now she is
By all;
But as when tameless energies
Bade her, of old, aspire to rise
O'er all!"

Suzsi, who had fixed her expectations upon discovering her godsire old Blaschka seated among the "*all*,"—the merry group who bore the burthen of the song,—and whose hopes were equally bent upon finding him in that happy intermediary stage of exaltation of mind, which lends itself freely to any extraordinary project, without being sufficiently tongue-loosed to render confidence dangerous, was grieved to perceive the old gentleman seated, pipe in hand, at a solitary

table; the great wolf-dog of the household lying at lazy length upon his feet, and his countenance lowering through the dusky fumes by which he was encircled. In truth, the worthy man had much personal cause for immediate sympathy in the pains of his friends; for his comforts had been strangely broken in upon, since the harmony of the Blue-Hedgehog had been "cracked and out of tune." He had lost a patient listener in his god-daughter,—a jovial boon-companion in Matthias,—and in Westermann himself, that cheering exhibition of animal spirits and youthful energy, which had been wont to animate his automatous existence; and he had ended by becoming as ill to please and as sullen as themselves.

"Master Blaschka," said Suzsi, softly approaching him, and covering her whispers under the tumult of the drinking chorus, "kind friend Blaschka!—I have much need of your services. Am I right in believing that you will somewhat trouble yourself to comfort and assist your poor god-child?"

"Speak out girl,"—said the rough old man,

"and do not stand there, chirrupping your words like a wren. Pray Heaven you have not learned this mincing courtesy of some stray *wienerfrecht*, among the coxcombs who have lately travelled hitherward."

Suzsi was silent for a moment. "How!" said she at length, "have *you* also, my tried and oldest friend, — have you also conceived this thought of me? Nay, then—it were useless to say further."

"Suzsi!" said old Blaschka, in a hoarse hollow voice, which rendered his words still more touching, "you were a very little child when first you climbed upon my knees, — a very young and tender creature,—and fair withal, and good, and gentle. I loved you, girl, in those days, for your parents' sake;—I have loved you since, Suzsi, for your own. You have seemed to me as a remembrance of my youth, and as a promise for my elder years.

Suzsi's tears fell silently and fast.

"You have been a well-doing maiden," continued the old man, his voice breaking as he

spoke. "Light word had never rested upon you, nor light thought seemed to harbour with you, till, —until,—Out on you!" said he suddenly interrupting himself, as a big tear gathered under his shaggy eye-lids. "I would give my right hand, Suzsi, that I had not lived to think of my old friend's last-living daughter, as I think of *you*;— or that some other wanton had been found to swell the triumph of yonder bragging vagrant from Vienna."

"This is too much," exclaimed Suzsi, tottering to the wall for support; and remaining speechless for many minutes.

"Johann Blaschka!" said she at length, trembling with indignation, "so hear and help me God! I am guiltless of this thing. My mother whom you loved,—your own, whom you delight to honour, went not more spotless to their graves, than I should do, were this night

> The maker of the lonely beds of peace
> To open one of the deep hollow ones
> Where misery goes to rest,—and put me in.

Blaschka looked steadily and impressively upon

his god-child. "It is enough," he observed. "Truth hath a tone and a seeming all her own; and those, Suzsi, who look upon your brow and listen to your words, may not doubt their sincerity. Say on, then, dear Suzsi, what would you of the old man?"

"Simply that he will permit me to accompany him to-morrow as far as the fortress, on his way to Pesth. Do not deny me,—my errand is of blameless import;—trust me, Johann,—trust the poor girl who never yet swerved from honesty and truth. Nay! you must even seek and gain my father's consent to my journey, for do we not all know that he will deny you nothing?"

"The girl's tongue hath bird-lime on't," muttered old Johann, secretly pleased and flattered by her request; and he lost not an opportunity which soon presented itself of making the demand, which was readily granted by the prudent Matthias. It occurred indeed to his habitual forecast, that the pretext for the journey put forth by Blaschka,—his wish to make a gift of head-gear to his god-daughter, or some other bauble of

her own choosing at the fair of Pesth,—was an earnest of future generosity. Accordingly he failed not to jest with Franz, when they retired for the night, upon the old farmer's gallantry towards his future bride; and to acquaint him with the morrow's projects.

"I should not mightily marvel, Franz," said he, "were our good friend Johann, whose care and thrift must have hoarded a heavier penny than bachelor housekeeping can task the spending, I should not much marvel were he to bestow something solid and comfortable upon Suzsi, towards your house and homestead."

Westermann cut short the covetous calculations of the old gentleman, by a hasty retreat. He turned towards his sleepless bed,—to his gloomy retrospections,—to his blighted hopes; and he ground his teeth for very agony, as he bethought him that the morrow's morn might lead the beloved of his heart into the embraces of his rival. What else could tempt her to Ofen? What but the detested traveller now harbouring there, could tempt her so far from home? She, who

since her betrothing had never left his side, and had relinquished every pastime befitting her age, to content his jealous humour.

He slept not,—how should he sleep—with such suggestions and such expectations rankling in his mind; and when the daylight broke, and he saw Johann Blaschka's *fuhrwagen,** with four long-tailed ponies trot into the yard, himself arrayed for the expedition in a new brown sheep-skin mantle, the seams welted alternately with green and scarlet morocco leather,—and his tight jerkin beneath, rattling with silver buttons as large as crown pieces, while his flapped felt hat was adorned with a bunch of artificial flowers gallantly stuck on one side,—Franz's spirit waxed hot within him. His first angry emotions however, were followed by a train of images,—the mourners supplied by memory for the funeral of love,—which, dark and inauspicious as they were, thrilled him to the soul.

* A Hungarian farmer in even moderate circumstances, never puts to fewer than four horses. They are driven in hand, and very much resemble the small but beautiful race bred by the Duke of Argyll.

"If I were to speak with her,—to remonstrate with her gently, I might yet be in time to save her," thought Franz. "And though her future existence is to me vain as the wagging of a reed in the wind, yet for her father's sake, her blind doating father, I will remonstrate with her this one more time." He threw open the door of the *speise-saal*,—at that early hour cold and tenantless; and seeing that the *hausknecht* had placed a cup of coffee upon the table devoted to Suzsi's use, he stood beside it, waiting with forced courage for her arrival.

The high-minded Hungarian was angry with himself to find how strongly his heart beat against his side, as he listened to the sound of her coming footsteps; when, hastened by the impatiently cracking of old Blaschka's whip, she entered the chamber in all the pride of her loveliness; her hair interwoven and braided with the most becoming nicety, her mantle gracefully slung on,—and her cheek flushed with hope and anxiety.

"Suzsi," said Westermann, stalking proudly to meet her, lest his courage should cool by

delay, "I know how little prayer or sorrow of mine may prevail with you;—full well I know how different are the thoughts and feelings you have lately nourished. But if you still remember the day when you pledged me a vow of better promise,—when you owned nor will nor wish save mine, and gloried in the submission,—let me still so far influence you, as to arrest your steps in the career of infamy. Your mother,—have you forgotten her? your father,—*can* you forget him?—Your own fair fame, Suzsi, the boast and reverence of Dorogh,—is it become altogether valueless in your eyes? But yesterday, keeping tryste in the vineyards; to-day, flying to the arms of a city lover. To-morrow— oh! who can say what new shame to-morrow shall bring forth! Restrain your steps, go not to Buda"—

Suzsi dashed the glittering tears from her eyes and vehemently interrupted him. "The hour is past," said she, "when words such as these could move me to your will: you have seen me bear your unjust suspicion with meekness; you have

seen me live on from day to day, without food, without sleep, without hope,—and yet you spoke not. You saw me pining and wasting under your estrangement;—but yet you spoke not. Even now, you have but uttered these entreaties as a plea to insult me with the expression of your unseemly fancies. Go, go! the hour is past for submission;—for henceforth, as I live by the breath of Heaven, I will act as my conscience dictates. I *will* go to the city;—I *will* follow my own good liking. Nay more, I tell you, Franz Westermann, that I go but to meet the traveller whom you have so unbecomingly reviled; and that the sound of his voice and the aspect of his face will be the first comfort I have known since they passed from my presence; and so,—God speed me!"

She leaped like a fawn into the *fuhrwagen* as she concluded this startling declaration; and Blaschka's cunning hand had cleared the gateway, and put his impatient horses into that running pace in which the speed of the Hungarian steeds chiefly consists, before Franz Westermann

had moved from the posture of amazement into which he had been thrown by the warmth of Suzsi's eloquence. It was in sooth but "the tender fierceness of the dove;" but as he noted the proud look of conscious rectitude with which her words had been uttered, an unquiet misdoubting spirit woke within him, whispering that he had been rash and over-susceptible. Content to leave him to his perplexities, we will follow the steps of the travellers.

CHAPTER III.

SOPHIA. But suppose I pardon
What's past, who can secure me he'll be free
From jealousy hereafter?
MAT. I will be
My own security! Go,—ride where you please,
Feast, revel, banquet, and make choice with whom,
I'll set no watch on you!

MASSINGER.

THE morning mists were slowly rising from the dull plain that extends itself between Dorogh and the fortress of Gran, as Suzsi and her venerable charioteer were whirled along the road towards Buda; and when the thin grey veil of vapours was slowly updrawn, a clear bright-eyed morning seemed glancing from beneath it. The vast *steppe*,—which no actual mode of Hungarian agriculture can redeem from the overwhelm-

ing shoals of sand dispersed every winter over its surface by the swelling of the mountain-brooks that traverse its pastures towards the Danube,—looked cheerless as a desart. The slender spring-shoots of the Turkey-corn or maize, scarcely served to tinge its dark furrows with green; and the dry maize stalks of the preceding year, gathered into heaps for fuel, alone diversified the monotonous level over which they were dotted.

But as the last wreath of mist disappeared from the landscape, how beautifully the heathy hills by which it is bounded, and the rocky cliffs which surround Gran, displayed their vine-covered heights, and sharpened edges, against the clear blue sky! How proudly they seemed to announce themselves as the ancient bulwarks of the majestic river that hurries its tumultuous waters along their base! Those who are called to admire the beauty of the site of Gran at such an hour, can pardon the prodigal predilection which has induced the present Primate of Hungary to adorn it with a temple,* whose splendours

* I inquired of the peasant who served me as guide at Gran, how

ill become a mean provincial town; a temple which, with the Chapter-House and College now erecting, will entitle it to compete with "Tyrnau of the many Towers," for the appellation of "the minor Rome."

Suzsi and her companion, however, were insensible to the beauty of the weather, and the improving aspect of the scenery; if indeed she noticed either, it was to welcome the mild spicy breezes which seemed to burst from out the coppices they traversed after leaving the village,—

long a time would be required to complete the church. "It will be finished in my life, I trust," replied the man; "for it is to contain a miraculous Virgin, and they have promised us some famous miracles." The church is built at the sole expense of the present Primate, whose revenues amount to 36,000*l.* per annum; but as his great age will probably prevent his accomplishing this splendid undertaking, the completion will fall upon the Emperor, who is said to have remonstrated with Prince Rudna, the venerable Primate, upon the vastness of his plan. The revenues of all vacant Prelacies fall to the share of the Emperor, as king of Hungary; and after the decease of the last Primate, his place was left unsupplied during *nineteen* years! The Emperor also inherits all the unbequeathed property of the Hungarian prelates, and it is only by particular sanction of the crown, that a Bishop can dispose, by testament, of his acquired fortune. Even the property of such peasants as die without a will, or immediate male heirs, reverts to the Emperor. The distant aspect of Gran is said to offer a singular resemblance to that of Athens.

pouring their snatches of welcome freshness upon her fevered forehead. There, the graceful birch hung its streaming fibres from the clefts of the rock, and the maple's red shoots were sheltered in their warmer nooks. The stern upright walnut trees seemed willing to withhold the tardy shade of their budding leaves from the road they had been planted to shelter; while that dingy parasite, the universal juniper, importunately enlaced its straggling boughs with the offsets of every prouder aristocrat of the forest which it might presume to approach. Here and there, clinging in bright patches to the crumbling *breccia*, the shrubby heath put forth its hardy blossoms; even the humble varieties of moss seemed touched into more cheerful existence by the newly-awakened breath that smelt so wooingly around them; and their "flings of sunshine" were scattered in tenderest vegetation among the broken crags; for

> The darkest rock upon the lonely heath
> Feels in its barrenness some touch of Spring;
> And in the cheering light and dancing ray,
> Its moss and lichen freshen and revive.

"And now, Suzsi," said Johann to the damsel by his side, when after a contemplative silence of many leagues, they entered the stony road leading to Alt Ofen, "where do you intend that we should part, in the city,—where would you rid yourself of my observation?"

"I trust we need not part at all," answered Suzsi, cheerfully; seeking to rouse herself from her fit of abstraction. "You will not, I am persuaded, refuse me half an hour for a visit at the fortress; and I will afterwards, *ha isten akarja,** cross the bridge with you, and share your business and pleasure at the fair."

"That is," answered old Johann in a measured tone of interrogatory, "you purpose that I should take a bath in the Turkish steam-pool,† while you seek some separate recreation?"

"By no means," replied Suzsi, patiently, "I entreat you not to leave my side; I even *need*

* *Ha isten akarja,* Hung., please God.

† The warm mineral baths of Buda retain the name of the Turks by whom they were constructed. They are much frequented by the lower classes, as a mere matter of luxury.

your protection. Be kind and fatherly to me, oldest of my friends; and do not pervert my words and distort their intention. Nay!" said she, as they passed the monastery of Sz. Pölten and approached the suburb of the city, "here is the post-house,—leave your horses for breathing-time and water, and let us ascend the hill on foot."

Old Blaschka in silent astonishment obeyed her rapid commands; and followed her light steps up the steep heights towards the fortress, without further question or comment. Together they reached the brink of the hill,—together they passed the well-sentinelled gates of the ancient and diminutive city or fortress of Buda,—together they entered the very court of his Imperial Highness the Palatine of Hungary's palace; and as Suzsi advanced towards the principal entrance, old Johann, for the first time, spake with his tongue, and began in no very moderate terms to upbraid her with light-headedness.

Suzsi, no whit moved by his spirited remonstrance, boldly assailed the door of the stately

pile; and having rung at the porter's bell, inquired whether Count E-ska, the *Tavernicus*, still sojourned at Buda, and whether she could be admitted to his presence.

The important *suisse*, in his broadly-belted crimson tabard, leaned majestically upon his coronetted *bâton* of office, to contemplate at his leisure the very extraordinary visitors he was summoned to announce; and the result of his examination displayed itself in the significant smile with which he bade a *jäjer* who was traversing the court, acquaint his Excellency the *Tavernicus*, that a very pretty peasant entreated an audience. Suzsi was equally perplexed by the smile and the tone assumed by the Imperial menial; but she was becoming inured to mortification; and having heard, even in the seclusion of Dorogh, of the mean and interested usages of German households, she proceeded liberally to "*graisser la patte à la valetaille,*" as the most certain means of reaching their master's presence.

The Swiss, astounded by her generosity, took

off his laced hat with as much reverence as though her bodice of serge had been a silken sark; and pointing out the way up the stately staircase to the apartments of the Tavernicus, he bade her enter his Excellency's ante-room, and do her errand. He appeared less willing however to admit the uncouth presence of the gaping Johann to the honours of "*les grandes entrées;*" but Suzsi was obstinate on this head, and succeeded in obtaining grace for her companion.

"She would venture to the Emperor's throne, —she would claim courtesy of his Holiness the Patriarch!" exclaimed Blaschka in holy horror, as the tramp of his boots resounded through the arched corridores that led to the chamber of Count E-ska. "The girl hath been looked on with the evil eye,*—and I was clear distraught to bear her company." He was fain to follow her airy footsteps, however, into a chamber of which two splendidly-liveried attendants held open the folding doors; just as a voice within, which appeared unaccountably familiar to his ears,

* A common Hungarian superstition.

exclaimed to his companion, "Suzsi! my flower of Dorogh! you must have thought that I had forgotten you;—I have not so far wronged my conscience, *süsses mädchen.* Even in the press of weighty affairs committed to my charge, your own have not been neglected.

"And you, too, my Demosthenes of the *speise-saal* — my Mirabeau of Hungarian *sans-culottisme,*— how hath gone the world with you, since we drained a measure together at the Blue-Hedgehog?" continued the young Tavernicus, turning towards Johann Blaschka, whose great eyes were fixed in utter consternation upon a vast mirror that reflected the whole interior of the gorgeous chamber. "How fares it now? What, dumb—speechless altogether?—You, in whose reproof was wisdom, —in whose rhetoric was conviction?"

"Johann Blaschka!" faltered the old man aghast. "Johann Blaschka himself," he reiterated, as the Tavernicus perceived that his distended eyes were riveted upon the reflection of his own shape in the mirror before him.

Suzsi, meanwhile, had advanced towards the

writing table by which the Tavernicus was seated; and having humbly kissed his hand, and thanked him for his honourable remembrance, she proceeded to acquaint him with the sorrow and humiliating suspicions to which she had been exposed in her faithful preservation of his secret. "Noble sir!" said she, smiling through her tears, "I trust you may never know such grief as that which has made my cheek so pale, and my heart so heavy, since I was last honoured by your lordship's countenance. Trust me, *tekintetes Gróf*, nothing less than this would have emboldened me to trespass on your goodness, that I might crave permission to explain the truth to—to—my father, and to"—

"My father's daughter's jealous lover? Why Suzsi, I had rather my name had been bruited—even in the very ears of the captious Ur Pál,—rather my titles had been proclaimed by all the heralds of the empire, than that one tear of thine had been wasted to secure my incognito. Here," continued he, taking a parchment from his secretary, "here is the lease; I fought a good fight

with my worthy friends the Canons to carry my point;—a bloodier battle methinks hath not chanced in Hungary betwixt priest and layman, since the fatal field of *Mohacs* saw seven bishops left stiff and stark upon its turf. But no matter. The Chapter of Gran hath added, at my instigation, another life to the renewal of the lease; and 'tis granted in the name of Suzsi Westermann, *edés kintsem!* *—say, — hast thou aught to object?"

Blaschka, who had by this time sufficiently recovered from his trance to comprehend the wonderful past, as well as the still more miraculous present passing before his eyes,—approached Count E-ska, exclaiming, "now God preserve your Highness! I know not whether it be greater pride to me to see your Excellence thus face to face, or to hear you breathe such comfortable words to an honest man's honest daughter."

"And Suzsi!" continued the Tavernicus, without noticing his interruption, "I feel that I am

* *Edés kintsem!* a term of endearment equivalent to the German *mein schatz*, my treasure.

still something in thy debt for the vexation and sorrow which I begin to see revealed in thy hollow eyes and fevered lips. Here!" said he, tossing into the hands of old Blaschka a purse heavy with gold, "let it be thy task to carry our little friend safely to Pesth, and to see that she is the best provided bride who ever garnished her homestead in Dorogh. And stay,—my worshipful monitor,—my doughty champion of Hungary!"—the Count took a richly-ornamented pipe from the table as he spoke, "refuse not to accept this token of friendship from Alexis E-ska; who presumes to suppose that thou wilt not prize it the less, for having served his need during the last campaign. And shouldst thou hear poor Suzsi's name unworthily spoken of by the village gossips, give boldly thine evidence in her favour. The Tavernicus pledges his word of honour as a man, and as an Hungarian, that his regard for her hath been that of a tender brother."

He kissed her cheek as he concluded; and further inquired whether her marriage could be solemnized within three days; for that it was his

desire to be present at the ceremony when he passed through Dorogh on his return to Vienna.

"My gracious lord," replied Suzsi despondingly, "So great an honour may not be. Franz and I are parted to unite no more."

"Tut—tut—child!" said old Blaschka chuckling with glee, I would wager my best team that one word of mine, and one smile of thine, will clear up this matter in a second. Surely! my lord! surely—in three days the ceremony may take place."

"On Wednesday then, towards evening, expect my coming," observed the Count. "Suzsi! remember, sweet! I shall have no time to spare for coy maidenly tears."

Suzsi, confused and startled, bowed assent; and was about to accompany her parting obeisances with a renewal of thanks, when the Tavernicus, having summoned an attendant from the anteroom, to whom he spoke a few words in a foreign language, proceeded to detain his guests by pointing out to their notice several objects of curiosity contained in the chamber. He bade

them note the costly table on which he leaned, and whose curiously wrought slab of silver and turquoises, declared it to be of Turkish manufacture.* "'Twas one of the baubles with which the tent of Kara Mustapha was enriched, when the troops of the Sultan traversed Hungary in triumph, in order to besiege Vienna. As thou mayst chance to know, orator Johann! the caravansarai of a Pacha then stood upon the site of this same palace; which the Hungarians afterwards constructed for the son of Maria Theresia, in hopes to allure a resident sovereign unto the splendid heights of Ofen. And this lamp of fretted gold, Suzsi,—'tis such as the ladies of the West"—

The *valet de chambre* re-entered, and delivered a message in the same foreign language. "It is well,"—said the Tavernicus. "Suzsi, I am now about to present you to a lady, a noble friend of mine, a friend of all who love Hungary. Remember that whatever she may inquire or require of you, must be answered and done without hesi-

* This table exists in the Ambras collection.

tation. She is of the rank of those unused to resistance or delay."

The attendants of the Count now threw open the inner doors of the apartment. Other, and still loftier, and still more gorgeous chambers, were successively opened, as the two Doroghians followed the steps of the Tavernicus;—arched galleries resplendent with crystal and gilding,—cushioned saloons, to adorn which a Pachalick seemed to have been rifled,—and finally, the stately chamber called the Hall of Battles, passed before the eyes of the amazed Johann. At length Suzsi felt her feet fall upon a substance softer than the moss of her native woods; and though the tender verdure of early summer scantly clothed the shades of the island of St. Margaret, which might be seen from the windows beside her, anchored in the mighty Danube below, she felt the fullest fragrance of the noon-tide of the year burst upon her startled senses;—orange blooms and tuberoses, and plants of the scented olive, were lavishly disposed in the recesses of the apartment.

Two pages in fanciful costumes were stationed by the emblazoned door of an interior chamber; which, flying open like the rest, Suzsi lifted up her eyes to find herself in a saloon less brilliantly decorated than many she had passed, but adorned with such graceful and simple elegance as fitted it for the retreat of a young and lovely princess. Several ladies, richly attired, were gathered into a group near the entry; and one among them graciously advanced to welcome the Tavernicus.

She was of middle height,—pale, even to a fault; —but that fault was beautifully redeemed by the contrast it afforded to tresses black as "the raven down of darkness," and to the perfect pencilling of her expressive eyebrows. Her "robes were loosely flowing"—her "hair as free;" but something sate upon her high forehead, more commanding than gem or broidered coif,—even the dignity of high breeding and high intelligence; and as Suzsi listened to the sweet tones that fell from her lips in addressing the Tavernicus, she instinctively acknowledged the influence of majesty and loveliness, by kneeling before her,

with her crossed arms folded upon her beating bosom.

The lady looked upon her with curious and steadfast attention; and turning with an approving smile to the Tavernicus, she tendered her "bluest veins" to be kissed by the trembling girl, ere she motioned her to rise. But although perplexed and overcome by the magnificence and strange-ness of the scene, and still more so, by the familiarity with which the ladies stationed behind the noble friend of the Tavernicus, gazed into her countenance, and seemed to comment upon her costume, Suzsi had not forfeited all her presence of mind. She replied without hesitation to the numerous questions with which she was now addressed; and the figurative diction of her Hungarian speech, as well as the graceful modesty of her attitude, appeared to delight the illustrious unknown, whose praises of herself were echoed with rapture by the chorus of ladies in waiting.

At the first pause, Count E-ska advanced, with the easy dignity of a favourite, into the circle. "I was anxious, madam," said he, "to

see the claims of pure, native Hungarian beauty, fairly laid before you. Your Imperial Highness's decision has, I perceive, already suffered the graces of this field-flower, to weigh against the faded languor of those forced exotics which exhibit an artificial bloom at Vienna."

The dames of the palace now attacked the young Tavernicus with affected indignation and real vehemence; till Suzsi was wrought to marvel that ladies so delicately fashioned, and so richly attired, could be so loud and vociferous.

"I will even further venture to express my doubts," resumed the Count; amused by their affectation, "whether her Highness's practised ear and excellent discernment, will not prefer the wood-notes wild of my linnet of the Dorogh woods, to any breathed by Sontag or Rubini. May I entreat permission, madam, to decide the question?"

"Sing, — *liebes kind*," said the Archduchess, kindly addressing the timid peasant. "Sing to me as you have done to the Tavernicus. Trust me I am not less indulgent."

Suzsi turned her eyes towards the Count, and having received a nod of encouragement, she began to pour forth, in her sweetest and most touching tones, the imitative quail-call, and the song it serves to introduce; and the applause and murmurs of pleasure with which the first stanza was received, emboldened her to surpass her former excellence in the second.

"A most melodious voice,—a surprising facility," said the Archduchess to Count E-ska, on the conclusion of the ballad. "I trust," continued her Highness, turning to Suzsi, "that the Tavernicus has fulfilled his promises, Suzsi; and that so duteous a child as I have heard thee named, is to be rewarded with the power of assuring her father's prosperity?"

"This hour is in truth, madam, the happiest of my life; all honour and all success have blessed it," replied the peasant of Dorogh, with the deepest feeling. "And may the great Ruler of Princes render those of your mighty Highness as consoling and as full of joy."

"Wear then this trinket in remembrance of

the event of the day," said the Archduchess, taking a massive chain from her neck, and throwing it over Suzsi's shoulders. "Recollect that if thou shouldst, in future life, have aught to seek at the hands of the Palatine, this token will prove a passport to his protection."

Suzsi had made her lowliest parting acknowledgments,—had spoken her grateful farewell to her generous patron, the Tavernicus;—had even reached the outer court of the palace on her return homewards, before her companion had sufficiently recovered from his *saisissement* to breathe one word in utterance of his amazement. During their visit to the Palatine's princely abode, the heart of the young girl had been awakened to sentiments of deeper interest than those of mere vulgar admiration. Her duty to her father, her devotion to her lover, her care for her own fair fame,—all were involved in the momentous change of her destiny. She was gratified,—triumphant,—clear from shame;—could she be interested at such a time by gilded cornices or inlaid floors?—could the splendours

of a royal dwelling, or the flowing state of an Imperial presence, disturb the gentle current of her heartfelt gratitude and joy?

Not so old Blaschka. *His* wonderment, when indeed it found leisure to expand itself in words, dwelt ever on the dazzling and inexplicable magnificence which had burst upon his bewildered senses; and maugre the untrim shagginess of the national *capût* in which he was enveloped,—maugre the rustiness of the flapped beaver, and still more—despite the uncollected mass of shapeless features it overshadowed, Master Johann descended the hill towards the suburb of *Wasserthal*, with an air of jauntiness, an elevation of head, and trippingness of step, which argued something of the self-delusions of Malvolio. The spirit of feminine mischief had indeed besieged the brains of the reverend elder. The giggling courtesy with which the court damsels had greeted his grotesque person and untutored demeanour, had proved as flattering to his perceptions as a more favourable notice; and the "hyperbolical fiend which vexed the man," prompted him to "talk of nothing but ladies."

He could scarcely recover his self-possession sufficiently to escort Suzsi in safety through the crowded alleys of the fair of Pesth, or to assist her in the selection of those household treasures which the liberality of the *Tavernicus* had destined for her service. A suit,—a wedding suit for Franz, was among the costlier articles whose acquirement taxed her well-garnished purse; and after she had expended her choicest care and invention in the distribution of the otter-skin,—the delicacy of the filigree buttons,—and the tint and texture of the kersey, she was not a little amused on beholding Johann, the sober, thrifty Johann, thrust himself forward into the tailor's booth, in order that vestments exactly similar to those of the bridegroom, might be adjusted upon his own proper person. He assigned indeed as an apology for this unwonted expenditure, his desire to do honour to the bridal of his godchild, and to the gracious presence of the Tavernicus; but Suzsi's laughing eyes suggested other motives for his new-born coxcombicality.

As they approached Dorogh on their return, the warm-hearted girl was almost provoked to observe that the mind of the old man whom she so loved and honoured, was completely engrossed by the novel and ridiculous fancies acquired in his recent adventures. "I have the lease close folded under my vest," said she, as she caught the first glimpse of the steeple of her village church, "close,—close,—and carefully."

"And the mercer's wares,—I pray thee are they safely stowed in the *wagen?*" replied Johann. "Truly I had been glad, child, that thou hadst named to me yester-eve thy project to visit her Highness, that I might have arrayed myself in a more seemly guise. Ill-interpreted will it be that Johann Blaschka entered the hall of the Palatine in his doublet of frieze, when his festival suit"—

"But thinkest thou truly, my old kind friend," said Suzsi, impatiently interrupting the tenour of his prolixity, "thinkest thou in truth that Franz will yield conviction to thy testimony;—will he,

in good sooth, acknowledge his injustice, and strive to repair his fault?"

"How can he choose but recognize our veracity?" demanded Johann, with an air of importance. "Have we not conversed, face to face, with her Imperial Highness the Archduchess; a distinction which Master Ménesatz himself, although an *ex-hofhausmeister* of the household of a magnat, never achieved? Did not the portly lady in the silken mantle say to me"—

"True, very true, dearest godfather. But it is rather the discourse of the *Tavernicus* which in this instance importeth my cause. The gentle bearing of her Highness is as nothing in my thought, compared with the zealous interference of Count Alexis,—with the possession of the lease,—and," added she, in a lower voice, "with —my present prospects."

"Ay—ay,—right and natural enough. Thou ponderest on thine approaching bridal;—a speedy wedding hath ever a smiling aspect to one of thy years. And now I think me, child, I marvel

that thou didst not buy thee a head-tire like hers, the damsel in poppy-red who kept her station at the Archduchess's,—I would say her Imperial Highness the Archduchess Palatine's left hand. What deemest thou the fair creature questioned of me, when,"—

"Stay!" said Suzsi, impatiently peering through the twilight, "is not yonder my father advancing to meet us? It is—it is!" she exclaimed, hastily descending into the road; and flying towards him, she was upon his neck, and in tears, before he had found time to vent those reproaches which, at Franz's suggestion, he had sallied forth to pour into her ears.

Poor Suzsi's explanation of the eventful occurrences of the day, was hurried, indistinct, and blended with more weeping than might permit mine host of the Hedgehog to comprehend at once the measure of his own good fortune, and of his daughter's happiness. But as the truth gradually unfolded itself, the old man clasped his hands in gratitude; and again and again embraced the child, whose moral courage and

sweet affection had been exerted to guard his worldly interests, and to extricate herself from a perplexing and humiliating position; and very readily did he and old Johann enter into her scheme of vengeance, against one who had been so willing to distrust her, and so prompt to revile and afflict her, as the sensitive Westermann had proved himself.

It chanced that at the very moment this malicious compact was entered into between the three, a horseman whom they speedily recognized as Ménesatz, the *Széchényische ex-hofhausmeister*, passed the *wagen*;—and Suzsi with the ready spirit of female art, immediately whispered her father to bid him home to supper;—it seemed that her terrors of his anathema had subsided,—or that her estimation of his power to injure her father was lowered. The invitation was speedily, though not very cordially given by the old man; —not cordially at least as an evidence of real Hungarian hospitality, which is the most extended, the frankest, and the most indiscriminating between the desart of *Sahara* and the North Pole.

Ménesatz appeared at first sullenly bent on refusal; he answered in a negative growl, which drew from Suzsi some of those gentle and persuasive accents, irresistible in every ear. Perhaps some latent desire to include *him* in her project of retributive justice,—to punish at once the refractory temper of her plighted lover, and the base insidious spirit of her discarded one,—prompted her coquetry on the occasion; for she certainly bade him welcome, as they entered together the *piátza* of the inn, in a tone which might well warrant his air of delighted surprise, and explain the hectic spot which brightened the pale cheek of his rival.

Never had Suzsi appeared more lovely in the eyes of either, than when she threw off her heavy mantle of martin-skin to seat herself upon the oaken bench of the *speise-saal.* Her cheeks glowing from the evening air, or flushed by the excitement of her dawning prosperity,—her eye, alternately sparkling with triumph, and moistened by the consciousness of coming events;—her lips, now lightened by smiles,—now tremulous from

suppressed emotion;—her very voice melting and varying under the influence of an overflowing heart,—all these beauties seemed overwrought by the gentle and happy feelings that seemed to animate

> This fairest thing that ever grew
> Beside a cottage door.

But the more such charms and the sweet qualities from which they sprung, became apparent, the darker grew the brow of him who had been urged by jealous pique to resign her troth-plight into her father's hands. At the very moment she had addressed him, in the spirited reply of the morning, something like a consciousness of error smote upon his feelings; and the unprecedented absence of a day,—of a lingering, tedious day,—had probably assisted to reveal to the young *kellermeister* how nearly and dearly she was twined round his heart.

How indeed could he choose but love her;—did not every thing in Dorogh love Suzsi? Did not the drowsy cattle lift up their heads and low to her call, as she passed their shed? Did not the

guardian dogs,—the fierce Hungarian wolf-dogs, —run fawning to her feet as she entered? Did not houseknave and maiden fly to kiss her hand as fervently upon her return, as though she had been a whole year alienated from her home? Did not her father leave his cellar-wicket ajar, to loiter by her side, and watch the changeful smiles of her sweet face? Did not old Blaschka sit sniggering opposite, with all the arch consciousness that becomes the confidant of a portentous secret?—and did not—alas! the while,—did not the courtly Péter Ménesatz condescend from his dignity, to beset her with his most honeyed flatteries,—his most serpent-like adulation, before his very face?

And she,—the loved of so many hearts,—thus sought of all—thus carest of all,—had she not deigned to enrich him with her first, her pure affections,—to wait upon his wayward will with untiring patience,—nay,—to sue to his obdurate heart for pardon and peace? And he had refused it!—had refused *her!*—scorned her,—reviled her,—cast her from him as a worthless thing!

He began to fancy it possible he might have been in the wrong,—to estimate the sacrifice made by his rash petulance; and by the time he had gazed a lover's hour upon Suzsi's open countenance, and listened to the music of her varying voice, a deep and painful repentance began to oppress his feelings. His head grew dizzy,—his eyes became dim; strange sounds rang in his ears, and he was at length fairly forced to seek the freshness of the night air for revival.

The duties of the waiterial profession do not lend themselves to the indulgence of sentiment. The hated iteration of his own name recalled the unhappy man from his reverie; and on returning to the *saal* he was required by his master to bring forth "flagons three of good red wine." The unwonted prodigality of Matthias struck him dumb with surprise; but his astonishment was deepened into consternation, as he listened to the toast which consecrated the libation. "The future landlord of the *Blaue Igel!*—and may he do justice to a fair wife and flourishing trade, when Matthias's last score is wiped away."

"Suzsi's cheeks blushed crimson as the words were cordially echoed by her godfather;—and Mé[illegible]satz, who had good reasons of his own for believing himself secure of the preference of the Chapter of Gran, hesitated only whether it would be becoming to drink to a pledge that so plainly pointed at himself. He resolved however to give the most gallant turn to his perplexity; so having kissed the cup, and bowed reverentially to little Suzsi, he drained the contents with enthusiasm.

The remainder of the evening was devoted to joyous merriment; and the following morning only witnessed a renewal of elated and boisterous glee on the part of Matthias and his leathern-cheeked Pylades. Suzsi, meanwhile, in obedience to her father's commands, hastened to put the mansion into the neatest order and array. Blaschka brought in cart-loads of juniper and holly from the woods, to decorate the chambers; the fatted calf was slain; and the choicest stores of Suzsi's thrifty housewifery were lavishly poured into the *Mundküche*. The oldest *antal* of wine in Matthias's cellar was carefully brought

down from the vineyard, adorned with a *lese-kranz*, or triumphal garland; and towards evening Suzsi stole out into the village, to invite her friends and playmates to her wedding,—which she announced for the following afternoon. It is true the communications were severally made under promise of secresy,—a promise as faithfully fulfilled as most others of a similar character. Each flew to her nearest neighbour,—as soon as the bride had quitted the house,—in order to discuss the suddenness and mystery of the arrangement; and to conjecture the name of the groom, which Suzsi had refused to disclose. Her *brouillerie* with her affianced lover had been the wonder of the village during the preceding nine days; and one and all among the chartered gossips of Dorogh, decided that his successor could be none other than the thriving Péter Ménesatz who, as they believed and lamented, was about to become *wirth* to the *Blaue Igel*. The absence of this doughty hero, who had been compelled to journey towards Caschau on the day succeeding Suzsi's visit to the fortress,

seemed to confirm the report; and while he was occupied in obtaining accredited securities to proffer to the scrutiny of the Chapter, the dames of Dorogh settled over their distaffs that he was busy in purchasing tokens for his bride, and household stuff for his future *ménage.* As they could not attack him with interrogatory congratulations, they consoled themselves by bestowing their inquisitiveness upon Franz Westermann.

This luckless hero had now attained the climax of his miseries. His master kept him at such disdainful distance, that there was no possibility of seeking at his hands a solution of the enigma; old Blaschka passed him by on the other side, whensoever he approached him; the handmaidens of the house were too busy in preparing their bridal finery to notice his inquietude; and even Suzsi herself, appeared entirely occupied in fancying cates, and compounding delicacies for the coming feast; and in obeying her father's injunctions that nor cost nor care should be spared to do honour to their guests. She stole indeed at times, from her tasks, and threw her arms around

her father's neck, to conceal "some natural tears that fain would fall;" but oftener still, he marked her whispering in a corner with old Johann; who was so altered in his address, so gallant in the cock of his rusty hat, and so juvenile in the indulgence of a newly-acquired cackling laugh, that Franz misdoubted, more than once, whether his "frosty pow" were not fated to share the *braut-kranz* of Suzsi.

Sometimes he was sufficiently vain to suspect that the looks of the bride were covertly fixed upon himself, with more intentness and concern than might become her position. "'Tis the more like her sex," thought he; "the more like herself,—to be casting artful glances upon one over whom her triumph is so complete. Like *herself*, said I? Alas! when was my Suzsi artful, or self-assured. *My* Suzsi? No, no! another's now;—and that other!"—

Towards twilight on this last interminable day of suspense, just as the single star of evening shone out brightly upon the sky,—just as the hush of the village brought back the remem-

brance of those delicious hours when they were wont to come forth together into the stillness, to look upon the fields and upon the skies, and build their future prospects alternately in either, — poor Westermann, weary and despairing, wandered into the *Piátza,* and leaned himself against the wall of its arcade. A light step passed beside him, a quick breathing trembled on his ear; and he started as, through the shadows, he recognized Suzsi herself!

"Franz!" said the maiden in a suppressed voice, but very gravely, "We are friends,—are we not? 'Tis not a fault of mine that you have refused to become something nearer and dearer to me; and I trust we may at least still remain on a kind and friendly footing."

No reply.

"And surely, Franz, you will not refuse to make one at my bridal? 'Twere an unlooked-for mortification to miss one of my most valued friends at such a trying moment."

No reply.

"To-morrow evening, in the dear old church

wherein we have so often knelt side by side, the ceremony will be performed."

Franz summoned his utmost resolution to his aid. "I will be there," said he; but he could not add another word.

"I was yesterday at the Pesth fair," resumed Suzsi, "And wishing to offer you some trifling remembrance of one towards whom you have professed to feel kindly, I ventured to select you, Franz, a gift—a wedding-garment. You will find it to-night in your chamber, Franz; and will wear it, I trust to-morrow!"

"To-morrow!" exclaimed he, in a broken voice. "If indeed I live to see the day, shall be my last of suffering. Think not I will dwell in the land, to witness that happiness which should have been mine own;—think not I will patiently live to bear about a blighted heart,—to cling to the weary sameness of existence, when its spirit and its hopes have passed away! Think not"—

I know not what Suzsi "*thought*" upon the occasion;—what she *said*, I well know; but her artless reply shall not be circulated through any

babbling of mine. It was all that a forgiving, loving, womanly heart might suggest; and all that could best soothe, and most clearly undeceive the irritable mind with which she had to deal. Her father and Johann, who had been hidden auditors of the explanation, applauded it to the echo, and even master Blaschka's fantastic merriment was subdued into silence, by the deep feeling which prevailed among the parties.

I doubt whether there breathed that night in Hungary a happier man than Franz Westermann. Not only did he forbear to listen to half old Johann's details of Suzsi's visit to the palace, and of her discourse with the *Tavernicus,*—but of his own free will he acknowledged that she had done well and wisely in keeping a secret which involved the interests of her country, and the credit of her country's friend. He even hazarded some such declaration as that which Massinger has put into the mouth of his countryman, and which I have quoted at the head of my chapter; but I trust to the discretion of Matthias's daughter not to profit

by the sanction breathed in such a moment of enthusiastic magnanimity.

The following day, when he awoke to the sober certainty of bliss, when he saw the whole village unite to welcome the arrival of the Tavernicus, by whom his happiness and prosperity had been so undeservedly secured, — when he heard his sweet bride smilingly recount to her gracious protector her past troubles and present joy, — glancing lightly over his *foible* in her narration, and striving to create a favourable impression of his character,—he stepped frankly forward,—publicly recanted his heresies,—acknowledged his errors, and mingled his declarations of unqualified happiness with earnest promises of future confidence and kindness.

The young Tavernicus would by no means permit the wedding of Suzsi to exhibit a dereliction from any national usage. He not only insisted that the young couple should parade their bridal finery through every path of the village, preceded by the gipsy band with its violins, and tabors, and *dudelsacks*, that abominable modification of

the Scottish bagpipes,—but accompanied the gaudy procession. Garlands were suspended from the thatched roofs of the cottages,—banners streamed among the acacia branches by which they were overhung; and as a welcome rumour had preceded Count E-ska's arrival, of the termination of the sittings of the Diet,—of taxes repealed, of oppressive edicts revoked, and of extraordinary bounties accorded by the Emperor for the encouragement of Hungarian commerce,—all which benefits the Doroghians were fond to attribute to the exertions of the Tavernicus in their behalf,—his popularity was for the moment unbounded.

But their "loud huzzas" were silenced for a time, when they learned that their venerated Primate had condescended, at the request of their idol, to pronounce the nuptial benediction of the fairest, and humblest, and most virtuous of his flock; and during the performance of the holy rite, in honour of which the church was brilliantly illuminated, a reverential and impressive silence gave effect to the trembling voice of the good old

man. There was not a clouded brow in the whole edifice, save that of Pál the Sexton; and even *he* felt so exalted and bewildered by the honour of performing "professionally" in presence of his Eminence, that the discomfiture of his brother's hopes, both as a wooer and as a man of business, appeared of secondary import.

Among the gaudy specimens of national costume exhibited in honour of the occasion, none shewed more splendidly, or was worn with a more decided air of self-content, than that of the worthy Blaschka; nor did his spurs fail to jingle with spirit and address in the national *galoppe* of the evening.

To this day, under favour of his memorable visit to the Palatine, he retains his post as *arbiter elegantiarum* of the thriving village of Dorogh; and recent *on dits* have asserted that his courtly breeding hath made some progress in the affections of one of its fairest daughters;—nay,—that could Count Alexis be prevailed upon to honour the wedding with his countenance, Johann would willingly renounce his single estate.

Perhaps this might be as well;—for his vivacious gallantry, and amended toilet might otherwise renew, at some future hour, the jealous torments of Franz, and demand once more the interposition of the Tavernicus.

THE ELIZABETHINES.

THE ELIZABETHINES.

Sad as the heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn!

KEATS.

I HAVE had reason hitherto to complain of ill-fortune in the visits I have made to convents and monasteries. Other travellers are sure to meet with some interesting novice or dignified lady abbess,—some celestial sister already "enskied and sainted,"—or some wasted votary, bearing the impress of secret and silent affliction,—of suppressed passions,—of self-resignation! For my own part, I must acknowledge that I never yet chanced upon a cloistered victim in any way worthy of sympathy. The reverend mother has usually proved a cross old woman much addicted

to snuff;—with a skin like yellow flannel, and a gait like that of the fairy Carabosse; and I have always found the sister appointed to do the honours of the convent, dull, corpulent, middle-aged, and contented, as well as self-contented. The only nun I ever saw who could lay claim to personal beauty, was a very lovely creature, with whom, some ten years ago, I passed a rainy afternoon at Tournay. Instead however of adding the grace of pensive *Elouiseism* to her other attractions, the holy sister proved as arrant a giglot as any reproved by the lady Beatrice of the Tor Hill; and laughed and crowed like an idiot, while I sat admiring her skill in ironing,—a most unsentimental employment for a heroine!

Henceforward however I will make no complaints on this head; for I have recently witnessed a scene within the walls of a religious institution, which has proved the source of many deep and painful emotions. I will not call it *interesting*, for such a term is most unfitly applied to the real right-earnest calamities of human life.

The convent of the Elizabethines, or *Elisabeth-*

inerinnen, is situated in one of the suburbs of Vienna; and was endowed by the queen of Hungary whose name it bears, as an hospital for fifty poor women, to be served and attended by as many professed nuns. The institution closely resembles that admirable one founded by Saint Vincent de Paule,—the *sœurs de la charité*,—and maintains the same character of universal benevolence, of self-denying and pious activity. In addition to the fifty objects received into the ward of the hospital, the Elizabethines distribute their charitable offices to such of the neighbouring poor as apply for assistance or advice; and the holy sisters are not only adored by those who have been restored to health through their skill and gentle care, but are regarded as the tutelary angels of the quarter in which their convent is situated.

Anxious to observe the internal regulations of an institution I had so frequently heard named with the blessings of gratitude, I presented myself at the *parloir* of the Elizabethines; and having referred my request for admittance to the

reverend mother, I was instantly and graciously received.

The sister appointed by the abbess to conduct me over the building, was a cheerful intelligent woman,—cheerful from the consoling sense of duties diligently performed, and from the remembrance of a long life spent in the service of her fellow creatures. She was gentle and even elegant in her address, although slightly deformed in person; but I beg my readers will not despond over this untoward circumstance, for I respectfully forewarn them that sister Agatha is not the heroine of my adventure.

"This is our laboratory," said she, throwing open a door which emitted a rich steam of spicy decoctions; and I perceived that the antique oaken compartments within, were closely filled with mysterious jars which appeared to contain all "the syrups of the east." A little boy beside the polished counter was receiving from the hands of an old nun, a basket of medicines for his sick mother; accompanied by more counsels and injunctions than I thought so small a head

might well retain; and in an inner chamber I caught a glimpse of three reverend sisters seated round a table, on which stood an air-pump, an electrifying machine, and a ponderous pair of scales. Their dress,—the flowing black robe and milk-white scapulary, worn somewhat after the fashion of a Roman *contadina*,—their dignified gravity, which might have become "Tynemouth's haughty Prioress," formed a strange contrast with their several occupations; which were those of pulling lint, weighing poppy heads, and shelling small seeds for some medicinal purpose.

After exhibiting "an alligator stuffed," and some other objects of natural history,—the marvel and glory of the simple nuns,—sister Agatha led me successively through the wardrobe, where a detachment of the nuns were busily stitching garments for the rest of the community,—through the sacristy, where another division was occupied in preparing decorations for their church, to be used on some ensuing solemnity,—and finally, into the kitchen of the convent,—the neatest and most appetizing I should think, that exists in the German empire.

Wherever we passed, the nuns crowded round to kiss the hand of my conductress, and to welcome her with loquacious delight. She was evidently a person of importance and a favourite, for even the sisters occupied in the confectionary in preparing delicacies for their convalescent patients, left their sugar to burn while they indulged in a passing gossip with sister Agatha.

The order and distribution of the extensive building were admirable; and the long spotless corridores paved with polished Salzburg marble, —the cream-coloured stone used for lithographic engraving,—formed a striking contrast with the usually filthy passages of Vienna mansions, and spoke strongly in favour of the superior cleanliness of female occupations.

"You are fortunate," observed sister Agatha, as we ascended the stairs, "in having visited us at the hour appointed for the reception of visitors into the ward. It is the bright season of our day, and will diminish the painful impression arising from the sight of the afflicted."

As she spoke she threw open the door of the

hospital,—a long gallery containing fifty beds, each bearing a German inscription, purporting that the wants of its sick tenant were relieved "through the love of God." A murmur of joy and surprise saluted the entrance of sister Agatha into the ward; and the numerous visitors, many of them belonging to a highly respectable class of life, deserted the beds of their sick friends to salute her with expressions of welcome and gratitude. Many of the poorer order, unable to lose their time, although in the offices of affection, had brought their work; and were diligently knitting or sewing while they listened to the monotonous recitals of the sufferers;—the mother—the sister—the friend—they were come to visit. On several coverlids lay little tokens of interest,—a flower,—a biscuit,—a handkerchief,—or some other humble offering, bestowed by the poor, in honest good will, upon the still poorer; and every ghastly countenance among the sufferers was lighted up by an expression of joyful and grateful excitement. There was one among them, old, and apparently heavily afflicted,

who was gazing with an intensity of affection, almost painful to behold, upon a well-dressed young man, a student of some German college, who sate beside her bed, holding her poor thin hand.

Their history was evident. She had sacrificed much to secure to a beloved son the education and appearance of more liberal means; and if I might judge by the affectionate expression of the young scholar's countenance, her motherly self-denial was neither unappreciated nor unrewarded. Several of the convalescent were dressed and seated among their friends; and the appearance of some even justified the information I had received, that the poor and needy were detained by the Elizabethines long after their recovery, provided they were unable to work for their maintenance elsewhere.

"It must be highly gratifying to your feelings, dear sister, to see those poor creatures restored to health and usefulness through your ministry," said I to my guide. "There are many here whose looks do equal honour to the skill and to the tenderness of those by whose care they have been tended."

" You must remember, however," replied sister Agatha, " that we frequently receive incurable patients; and that among so large a number, we have the grief of seeing many die, notwithstanding our most anxious exertions. There," she continued in a whisper, pointing to the last bed we had passed, " *there* lies one to whom it only remains for us to administer the last offices." I looked, and saw a wasted pallid face, turned towards the pillow, as though to drown the murmur of the crowded ward. Her eyes were closed, and her slight delicate hand lay open upon the sheet in the relaxation of debility. She was young, and as far as I could judge from the adjustment of her linen, was of a better order than the other patients.

As I paused for a moment at the bottom of the bed, to look upon her with the reverence due to one who is about to put on the garb of immortality, my shadow fell upon her face. She unclosed her sunken eyes for a moment, and then shut them, after a look of despair,—a shudder of hopelessness, which I can never forget. I passed

on hastily; and looked at my attendant for an explanation, as she led me into a little chapel at the end of the gallery, opening into it for the service of the sick.

I observed that the eyes of the compassionate nun were filled with tears; but as we were now before the altar, she knelt down to repeat a paternoster, without replying to my mute inquiry. Some minutes afterwards, as we were descending the stairs towards the church of the convent, I took courage to question her concerning the dying woman.

"You say that she will not long survive; yet of all the hospital, hers was the only bed unsoothed by some kind visitor. The poor creature appears totally deserted,—has she no friends in Vienna?"

"She is heavily visited both in mind and body," replied sister Agatha, evasively. "The Almighty hath been pleased to deal with her as with those he loveth. When she first became our inmate, she was placed next unto the bed of the young student's mother; and the sight of his

assiduous filial affection proved so great a trial to the poor creature's feelings, that compassion induced me to remove her to the end of the ward; where her desolate condition is less apparent to others,—less painful to herself."

At this moment we entered the church; and from a feeling, intelligent woman, sister Agatha became at once the narrow devotee,—the blind votary of superstition. Her order, and its dignity,—her church and its relics,—her director, and his anathemas, became paramount in her mind; and she proudly claimed my admiration for the skeleton of the giant St. Columbus, which sparkled through its glass coffin with ribs set in false stones and tinsel,—and for the choir behind whose mysterious curtain, the hymns of the veiled Elizabethines are heard with reverence by the congregation. From the church we passed into the inner sacristy; where the good nun expatiated right eloquently upon the beauties of several gilt calvaries and holy sepulchres, presented to their treasury by Maria Theresa and her successors. Despairing of bringing her back to

the subject of the dying woman above, I prepared to take my leave by presenting a trifling offering towards the funds of the institution; and I was indiscreet enough to venture a second donation, with a request that it might be applied to the especial use of the poor deserted woman.

Sister Agatha, who had accepted my first gift with gratitude, put back my hand with indignation when I tendered the second. "Have you observed," she inquired, "any symptoms of partiality in our arrangements,—or any want of general comfort? What do our sick require that is not instantly administered? Nay—what fancy or caprice do they express, which is not anxiously gratified by the reverend mother?"

I craved forgiveness for my involuntary offence, which I attributed, and truly, to the heart-felt compassion inspired by the deserted condition of the dying patient; and sister Agatha after silently examining my countenance, as if to assure herself what degree of confidence she might place in my discretion, replied, "well, well; say no more of it,—I perceive that the request, however

indiscreet, arose from a gentle feeling. Stay!" she continued, leading me back into the sacristy and closing the door after us, "you are young,—you belong to the children of the world,—and the history of that unfortunate woman may prove a useful lesson. Have you leisure to listen?"

I seated myself by her side with grateful alacrity; and sister Agatha, taking out her knitting, commenced the following narration.

"I will call the poor soul Cecilia; and as I have no fear that you will discover her real name and title, I will fairly own that she is born of one of the noblest houses of Hungary,—her ancestors have even been among the most liberal benefactors of the convent in which her last sufferings have been alleviated. Cecilia became an orphan shortly after her birth; and as her fortune was considerable, she was bequeathed to the guardianship of the head of her father's family. Even now you may judge that she was once a lovely creature; and when I add that her disposition was volatile, and her education totally neglected, you will be the more inclined to look with lenity

upon the indiscretion that induced her at the age of sixteen to elope from her uncle's palace, and to bestow her hand and affections upon a very unworthy object.

"It was during the occupation of the army of Napoleon; and at a period when the Austrian nobility found themselves compelled to admit into their domestic circles, many French officers who, at another time, would have been spurned from their society. Among the rest, a Colonel of Cuirassiers was quartered in the palace of Prince —— of ——, Cecilia's uncle. He proved to be a man of ignoble birth,—ignoble character,—ignoble habits;—but the poor child who had been accustomed to receive among her proud relations only the harshest usage and coldest severity, was too easily touched by the adulation of the wily Frenchman to be sensible to these defects. His anxiety too, to possess himself of Cecilia's ample dower, taught him to conceal them,—if not from her family,—at least from her deluded self. To dwell as little as possible upon her errors, permit me to say that Cecilia was induced by her lover

to elope from Vienna; and that she became a wife and a mother before she had attained her seventeenth year.

"Were you better acquainted with our national habits, it would be useless to add that she was immediately denounced as an outcast and an alien, by her indignant family; that her name became a forbidden sound, and that she was soon accounted as among the dead. Well would it have been for the unhappy creature, had the Almighty indeed so ordered her destiny! for long before her splendid fortune was dissipated,—and a few years enabled her depraved husband to squander it away,—Cecilia had become an object of disgust to him for whose sake she had sacrificed her kindred and her country; and neglect and cruelty sufficiently justified the antipathy conceived against him by her relations on their first acquaintance.

"The fortune of war was fated to relieve her from the persecutions of him whose obscure name she bore;—at the age of twenty-one, Cecilia found herself a widow and the mother of three

children as destitute as herself! And now, for the first time since her imprudent marriage, she ventured to address her exasperated uncle,—for the wants of her innocent babes taught her to overcome the suggestions of her innate national pride,—to forget the sensitive delicacy of her character; and in a letter dictated by humility and repentance, she craved the charity of her haughty kindred.

"A tardy and brief reply was vouchsafed to her supplication;—but it contained a small remittance; and in the present relief afforded by the gift, Cecilia forgot the wound inflicted by the terms in which it was bestowed.

"A second time, however, the young mother found herself penniless; and her sufferings were now aggravated by the loss of her youngest child. 'I nursed it,' said she, when she told me her pitiful story, 'and I verily fear it died of famine, for I was well nigh starved myself. But the despair which overcame me when I stretched its little wasted limbs for the grave, gave me courage to apply once more to my cruel uncle.

"'A second supply was the result of my appeal; but as it was accompanied by an assurance that it would be the last, I resolved to profit by its temporary relief, and return to my native country. I thought that the sight of my babes in their destitute condition, might win the compassion of those on whom they possessed other and stronger claims. I longed too to hear the accents of my fatherland,—to breathe once more my natal air;—for alas! the country of my adoption had proved but a harsh stepmother. Since I had left my native land, my lot had been one of mortification and misery; and the remembrance of home,—even of the unendearing home of my early years, grew sweet by the comparison.

"'But on my return to Austria, I found myself a greater alien,—a still more reviled, more desolate creature! I was assured by the survivors of my family that in renouncing their name by my imprudent marriage, I had forfeited all claims upon those who bore it; and that by intruding my beggary upon the joys of their prosperity, I had but hardened their hearts towards my wretched children.

"'I shall never forget the day,' said poor Cecilia," continued the nun, "'on which I turned from their lofty portal towards my own obscure retreat; my heart swelling within me as I clasped my lovely children to my desolate bosom. I had then some means of support still remaining,—the savings of my frugality;—and I had still strength to work; so that when I shut myself up in my own chamber, I resolved that no extremity of want should induce me to court a second repulse. But I had not duly calculated upon the nature of the trials I should be doomed to undergo. I had thought but of ceaseless labour,—of domestic drudgery;—of want of food, of want of rest; and these miseries I could bear, and I *did* bear them cheerfully. But with all my hardships I was unable to earn sufficient bread for my children. I saw the loveliness with which God had gifted them, gradually fade away;—their strength wasted,—their little voices grew feeble as they breathed their endearments to their miserable mother,—their growth was suspended by want of proper nourishment,—and already my fears foretold a still more fatal result.

" 'Could my heart resist such a suggestion? Oh! no;—I addressed myself again and earnestly to my estranged connexions; and my adjuration was so fraught with the expressive wretchedness of my mind, that it could not be utterly disregarded. It chanced also that my boy had become, through the death of a relation, the heir presumptive to a distant branch of my family; and my uncle, mindful perhaps of this contingency, was moved to offer him his protection. 'Resign the care of your children to me,' he wrote in reply to my petition. 'Your conduct has proved that you are unfit to become the directress of their education; and, by your own declaration, you lack the means for their support. I will provide liberally for them both; if they are permitted to assume my name, and if their mother consents to leave this country at once, and for ever.'

" 'Rather beg their bread,—rather perish with them!' was my first exclamation on perusing this barbarous request. And I *did* beg—again and again,—humbly and earnestly; but perhaps

I wanted something of the lowly air of habitual supplication, or hunger and despair might impart a look of repellent ferocity to my countenance, for the hearts of the humane were seldom touched by my supplications. In a few weeks therefore my fears recurred with added force;—my pride, my courage failed under the solicitudes of a mother's love, and I formed at length the desperate resolution of obeying my uncle's commands.

" 'It was a heavy morning that which I had fixed for the execution of my project, and my mind was fevered by a night of sleepless horror. I had sat up to render the rags of my poor babes as little revolting as possible to those unto whose mercy I was about to commit their destiny; and when daylight came, I roused them gently and tenderly from their calm slumbers. I dared not look upon their sweet faces as I dressed them for the last time; and when I imprinted a burning kiss upon the glossy curls of their little heads, I felt that the Almighty was dealing with me more heavily than I might bear!

" 'Perhaps despair had already numbed my heart into endurance, for I gathered courage to tell them that their troubles were over;—that they were henceforward to dwell in a fine house, —with sweet food,—with soft rest to restore them;—and that they must learn to reverence the noble hand from which they derived such gifts, and try to forget—but no—no—no! I could not for worlds have told them to forget me; —and had I done so, the request would have been unavailing. They clung to me,—they wept and implored, and finally prevailed. No! I could not part from them that day!'

" I repeat Cecilia's words as nearly as I can remember them," said the nun, after a painful pause; "but I cannot give the expression of a mother's voice to my narration;—I remember that *hers* reached my inmost heart."

" And did she at last gather strength to part with the poor babes?" I anxiously inquired.

" The separation was effected by an unpremeditated meeting with her uncle," continued sister Agatha. " They were at the moment

almost expiring with hunger; and the fine equipage and dainties proffered by the Prince, induced the little innocents to consent to what was at first announced as a separation of a few days from their heart-broken mother. Young as they were, they did not notice how frequently the visit was prolonged; and after repeated disappointments of returning home, their restlessness was at length changed into contentment. They were kindly used; and like all children, they learned in time to forget the absent. The mother who had been so missed and so lamented,—for whom they had hoarded their luxuries,—and renounced their infantine enjoyments, was soon rarely mentioned,—and finally—forgotten.

"In the mean time poor Cecilia, who had accepted a limited pension from the Prince, and had fulfilled the necessary condition of quitting the Austrian territories, was for a time reconciled to her miserable destiny by the certainty that her children were rescued from the sufferings and dangers of privation. 'In the grievous loneliness of my existence,' said she, 'I had the con-

solation of knowing that my treasures no longer fixed the eager eyes of starvation, upon the morsel I was unable to purchase to appease their famine. I was supported during the day by a sort of feverish excitation which led me to wish for the return of night, that I might lose in sleep my sense of sorrow; but when the night came, and I missed from my side the little beings who had slumbered there from infancy,—I could not rest! And thus longing by day for the night,—by night for the return of day,—long weeks, long months passed over my miserable head. Nothing but my flattering trust that my son's accession of fortune would one day or other enable me to clasp in my arms the precious creatures for whose well-being I had forfeited my own happiness,—enabled me to support existence;—and even that hope could not long suffice to smooth the path of self-denial. My mind, fixed with constant and dreadful intensity upon the absent objects of its affections, became enfeebled; my courage relaxed with my judgment,—the yearning of my heart grew too strong for mastery,—and in a moment of frenzy, I returned to Vienna!

" 'My first object was to seek a furtive interview with my children. I was well aware that the greatest caution would be necessary for the accomplishment of my end; and for some days I contented myself with watching, at dusk, under the windows of my uncle's palace. I thought that among the shadows of its inmates, revealed by the lights within, I might perhaps distinguish those of my children. I was aware that they inhabited the same chamber which had been mine in childhood; and I have stood on the bastions beneath it, through rain,—through snow,—through piercing frost,—in the expectation of catching the joyous echoes of their young voices; at length I took courage one morning to watch their coming out for their daily drive.

" 'I thought I had sufficiently disguised my altered person; and with trembling limbs I slowly paced along the street, when the gorgeous carriage bearing the arms of my family rolled out of the court of the palace, and passed close beside me. I could not refrain from looking up;—and in a moment I saw the fair face of my

youngest born,—glowing with health,—radiant with happiness; but the smile of her sweet eyes fell upon her mother without recognition,—she had forgotten me!

" 'Could I bear this! I fell senseless upon the pavement; and the menials of the carriage, which wounded me as it passed, recognized in the poor wretch they humanely ran to raise from the earth, a rejected daughter of their master's house!

" 'This public exposure, irritated—and perhaps justly,—the feelings of the Prince. He wrote me a letter filled with a torrent of invective,—upbraiding me with ingratitude, and threatening me to withdraw his protection from my children, if hereafter I sought directly or indirectly, to come into their presence. He reminded me of the dangers that would await them in case of my death, under such a desertion. He painted in strong and appalling terms, the perils which poverty and desolation might entail at some future time upon my daughter. But he might have spared his eloquence;—the blow was already

struck,—the bruised reed bowed unto the dust,—and death was about to release the wanderer from her sufferings, and himself from my further intrusion.'

"It was precisely at this period," resumed the nun in a more cheerful tone, "that the destitute condition of our poor Cecilia drew towards her the attention of the Holy Father Director of our order. In visiting a sick parishioner, he learned that a young person of interesting appearance was dying in a small attic in the house; to the proprietor of which she was a total stranger. He did not, as you may suppose, hesitate to visit the bedside of the desolate sufferer, whom he found sinking under a slow fever,—destitute of the common means of support,—and oppressed by all the terrors of mental despair. Within a few hours Cecilia was removed at his suggestion into our hospital; and few were ever sheltered within its walls unto whom its comforts were more vitally necessary. It was my own turn of duty the night of her admission," said the nun, "and her youth and beauty exerted in the

first instance, a blamable influence over my feelings. Other motives of compassion speedily declared themselves. I found that my lovely patient's disorder originated in the exhaustion arising from a long endurance of cold and hunger. She had fasted for many days together during an inclement winter, in order to increase the scanty meals of her children; and during the first night that I watched by her side, I heard the names of those beloved children, murmured again and again by her parched lips, as though their very sound were a watchword of salvation!"

"And was her case hopeless, even at the time sound of her admission?"

"The cares lavished upon her failed not to procure a transient revival. In a few days Cecilia recovered her consciousness; and her gratitude for my attention in removing her from the painful position which chance had assigned her in the ward, opened her heart towards me, more than towards her other attendants. It appeared as if her feelings were relieved by confiding to me the history of her afflicted life."

"But surely,—surely—something might still be done to save her," said I, interrupting the good sister; "surely a malady resulting from temporary privation cannot affect the powers of life?"

"We are not reckoned unskilful, even by the faculty of Vienna," answered sister Agatha, with an air of professional dignity. "The influence of the mind is all-powerful over the body, and we know that few diseases are more important than those arising out of moral causes. You must remember too, that Cecilia's frame was weakened by want and toil during three entire years,—that its powers have been exhausted by prolonged fasts and prolonged vigils;—nothing now can save her."

"But you will apply, without doubt, to her family,—to her cruel, selfish uncle. Surely you will attempt to bless her dying eyes with the sight of those beloved objects to whom she hath sacrificed her existence?"

"Impossible!" replied the nun with provoking calmness. "The Prince is one of the most

powerful and liberal benefactors of our convent. Were the reverend mother,—to whom however I have not thought it expedient to apply on the subject,—were the reverend mother to provoke his Highness's displeasure by such an appeal,—she would be injuring the cause of the poor,—and bereaving the many in order to gratify the worldly passions of a single heart. To the suffering multitude we owe an account of our ministry; and their wants and claims alas! will long survive the sorrows of poor Cecilia."

"At least permit *me*, who as a stranger can incur no risk to make immediate application to the Prince. His name,—his name—I entreat you do not let this victim of maternal love die unrewarded.'

"You are an enthusiast," replied the nun with a gentle smile, "and forget that the slightest motion will extinguish the flame of an expiring lamp;—one moment of agitation would destroy Cecilia. Besides, although a heretic, you must be sensible that the consolations of religion alone become the bed of death. It would be cruel to

rekindle earthly affections in a heart where the hopes of faith should alone prevail. But I must not loiter here," continued sister Agatha, respectfully kissing my hand. "Farewell, sister! farewell;—may your journey prosper! and when you return to your own remote country, remember that the sick and the poor are comforted by the lowly order of St. Elizabeth, '*through the love of God!*'"

The day following my memorable visit to the convent of the *Elisabethinerinnen*, I departed, not under the influence of sister Agatha's benediction, "to my own remote country," but on a tour through Hungary which occupied some months. Previous to leaving the city of Pesth,—the principal residence of the Hungarian nobility, I chanced one morning to enter a bookseller's shop in search of books of instruction for children, written in the national language. The master of the shop, in reply to my inquiries, observed that he could supply me with the newest and best as soon as the Countess Woleska had finished her selection. I looked towards the

lady thus referred to, and saw a slight figure in deep mourning, accompanied by two children,—an elegant little girl, and a noble boy about six years of age.

The bookseller whispered that he was the young *Fürst Reussdorf;* and at the same moment the Countess turning round to desire her little girl would offer the books to the English lady, discovered to me a face,—no! I could not be mistaken!—a face which I had seen but once, to remember for ever; and which I had for months past believed to be shrouded in the damps of death,—that, in short, of sister Agatha's heroine. Even as it was, it was totally colourless; and as I was in the very land of Vampirism, I literally shuddered as I fixed my wondering gaze upon the Countess, and could not recover my voice to thank the lovely child from whose hand I received the books. I concluded my bargain as precipitately as I could; and walked out into the street, without well knowing what I was about, or where I was going.

My first anxiety on returning home was to

question our German Courier respecting the family of Reussdorf, and the Countess Woleska; but I received only those vague and tormenting replies which one is sure to extract from such a source. "The Woleskas," he said, "were a very noble race,—very powerful,—very wealthy; settled in several provinces of the empire, one branch in Hungary,—one in Styria"—

"But the Countess?"

"*The Countess!*—the young one or the old? The Countess Dowager of Woleska is of the *Schwarzenwäldchenwesterhofische* family—a lady of the highest descent and"—

"No—no—the young Countess."

"The young Countess?—There are several, *gnädige Frau;*—the Countess Wenzl,—the Countess Rudolf,—the Countess Moritz," &c. &c.

Finding it impossible to come to the point, I resolved to wait for the evening's opera, when I felt sure of learning the gossip of the city from some of the visitors to our box.

"Ah! you have seen the young Countess Woleska," was the ready answer to my inquiries.

"A charming woman, although rather *passée*, but still a very interesting ruin."

"Can you inform me whether she has been long resident in Hungary?"

"Scarcely a month,—can it be possible that you have not heard her history,—a very eventful one, if the *on dits* are accurate. Her little son came suddenly into possession of the principality of Reussdorf, by the death of a relation in whose house he was educated; but the Countess having formed a connexion early in life with a French adventurer, a Buonapartist, which of course had obliged her family to cast her off, was at the time of his unexpected succession, concealed in some obscure retreat,—some say a prison,—some a madhouse;—and was brought forward, to the amazement of all Vienna, by the family confessor; some meddling Capuchin who had never lost sight of her. She was in a most precarious state of health, and was not at first expected to survive her change of fortunes."

"And what has brought her hither?"

"She remains at Pesth while the family castle

in Esclavonia is fitting for her reception,—for she has resolved to educate her son upon his patrimony, till he is old enough to commence his studies at the National University. We know nothing of the Countess but from report; for she has declined entering into the society of the city, and has had the *maladresse* to refuse an invitation from the Palatine himself, on the grounds of ill health and recent affliction. *Entre nous,* I rather imagine that the fair lady is conscious her long seclusion from society has rendered her somewhat unfit to move in the circle to which her descent admits her."

It was not for a stranger like myself to controvert this opinion, or to assure my self-important friend that not even the Countess Téléki, the Lady Jersey of Pesth,—might vie with the young Countess Woleska, in a gentle, graceful timidity of address which cannot become either out of date, or *déplacé;* I ventured however to assert that she had never been confined either in a prison or a madhouse.

"You are acquainted with her then,—and

have been betraying me into relating anecdotes of your friend. This is not fair, but it affords me at least the pleasure of assuring the Countess's enemies that her intimate acquaintance has vindicated"—

"Permit me to assure you that I never interchanged a syllable with the Countess Woleska;—but I again repeat on the authority of those best informed, that there never existed a brighter example of the first virtue of womanhood,—motherly affection."

I never saw this interesting woman again; but I was satisfied to leave her in the possession of every earthly blessing; and to know that a life of suffering and resignation, had been repaid by moments of joy such as can have rarely fallen to mortal lot. May they be long and frequently renewed!

THE FERRY ON THE DANUBE.

THE FERRY ON THE DANUBE.

The cauld sleety cloud skiffs along the bleak mountains,
And shakes the dark firs on the steep rocky brae:
While down the deep glen brawl the snow-flooded fountains
That murmured sae sweet to my laddie and me.
It's na their loud roar on the wintry wind swelling,
It's na the cauld blast brings the tear in my ee,
For O gin I saw my bonny braw callan,
The dark days of winter were simmer to me.

TANNAHILL.

I CAN scarcely remember so intensely cold a day as that on which I entered Hungary. I had been delayed on my journey the preceding afternoon, by the sudden rising of a whirlwind which drifted the snow, so as to render the road impassable. Our postilion maintained that it was blocked up by overturned carts; and accordingly he took a short cut over the fields, where the treacherous surface of the snow betrayed us

every moment into deep ravines, from which the strength of four powerful Hungarian horses could scarcely extricate the carriage. Compelled to follow on foot, half-blinded by the drifting snow, and almost insensible from cold, we reached at night-fall the little frontier town of Haimburg, the ancient Carnuntum;—and its miserable inn,—a *ci-devant* convent, the cells of which mine host has apparently thought it profane to furnish with the mundane conveniences of life,—appeared a paradise after the destiny I had anticipated of passing the night *à la belle étoile*. Our servant, who had accompanied the French army in its disastrous Russian campaign, declared that he had not at any time suffered more severely from frost, than during our *trajet* across the memorable plain which is bounded by what are vulgarly termed on the spot, the *Turkish bastions*,* a range of rocky hills which once formed the Ottoman frontier.

The following morning, cheered by the return

* *Türkische schünze.*

of daylight to prosper the undertaking, I quitted Haimburg; but not without yielding the due tribute of admiration to its picturesque fortress, its Roman arch, and to the lovely scenery surrounding a neighbouring *château*, which was for some time the residence of the ex-queen of Naples. On leaving the town, the defile of which it forms the key gradually widens into a fertile valley;—its banks being clothed with woods, which stretch onward into apparently interminable forests. The towers of Presburg at length appear above the wooded foreground; and having passed the Hungarian frontier, and exhibited his Latin passport in the pretty village of Wolfsthal, the traveller enters an avenue of ancient trees which leads to the ferry over the Danube.

It struck me as we passed through Wolfsthal that we excited more than common curiosity; women, children, men, and dogs gazed upon us with amazement. An English carriage or servant will at all times provoke a most inquisitive scrutiny; but ours were both from Vienna, and such as may be hourly seen on the same road. I

noticed that the Slowáks who passed us on their sledges, with their heads closely screened from the cold by the *capuchons* of their woollen mantles, expressed, both by look and gesture, the utmost astonishment; and I concluded that they were noting us for fools or mad, to be making a journey of pleasure at such a season.

At length, on reaching a spot where a crowd of peasants were clearing the road from snow for the passage of the *eilwagen* or public stage, I learned from their vociferous exclamations that their wonder was excited by some object immediately behind the carriage; and putting out my head into the bitter air, I perceived a Slowák clinging there in a cowering attitude. It was far from my intention to warn him from his post;—for there is something in the picturesque wildness of a Slowák figure, which bespeaks interest and compassion;—but the moment he caught my eye, he leaped or rather rolled from his station, started across the road, and disappeared over the adjoining fields.

I was not much moved by the incident; the

habits of this uncouth tribe being at all times unaccountable to a stranger; and without further notice, we rapidly traversed the open meadows, and found ourselves on the banks of the half-frozen Danube, immediately opposite to the city of Presburg.

The town,—or as it calls itself,—the "chief, free, royal and Imperial coronation-city of Poson," is built irregularly upon the side of a steep hill, whose summit is crowned by the magnificent towers of the *Seminarium*, ruined and devastated by the French during their invasion of Hungary. The adjacent hills are partly covered by fine woods, partly by extensive vineyards, which in some spots intersect the town itself; and the gilt cupola of the cathedral, the numerous spires of the convents and other churches, and more than all, the picturesque site of the town itself, conspire to form a highly interesting and animated object. On the opposite bank, from which I contemplated its busy and romantic aspect, the woods dip into the very waters of the Danube; and a few gaudy pavilions, and public toll-houses appear scattered among their spreading branches.

The ferry had nearly received its freight when we were slowly rolled down the bank of the river to take our stand among the sledges, *char-à-bancs*, and *postwagens*, which seemed already to form a sufficient load. A drove of Hungarian cattle, which are recognized, I believe, as the finest in Europe,—a dozen horses, and about thrice as many greasy Slowáks in shaggy cloaks with two-tailed black woollen capes, and mustachioed Hungarians in furred pelisses,—completed the cargo;—all noisy, all discontented,—all eager to set off, yet retarding our departure by a dialogue of yells and shouts with the loiterers on the shore.

The appearance of the river was any thing but inviting for the passage; to an inexperienced eye indeed it seemed rendered absolutely impassable, by the huge blocks of ice which lifted up their snowy monster-like heads above the surface. I remembered that the size of these floating islands of the Danube had sometimes rendered it necessary to open a discharge of artillery upon them, in the environs of Vienna, lest they should be borne by

the current against the bridge; and considering the force and rapidity of the tide, the dimensions of the masses of ice, and our own overloaded vessel, I thought it very possible we might become food for sturgeon, or be doomed to float into Turkey without further apprehension of bowstring or Pacha.

As I sate in somewhat uneasy contemplation of the scene, peevish with the oxen for tossing their branching horns—with the horses for snorting—and with the vociferous crew for their deafening volubility,—my attention was suddenly drawn towards the figure of my friend the Slowák, dodging among the trees of the avenue which leads to the water's edge; apparently in great trepidation, and striving to reach the ferry without passing through the crowd surrounding the landing-place. His eyes were intently fixed upon the vessel; and as he ran, or rather crouched towards the shore, I distinctly saw him make signals of intelligence to some person in the vessel;—whether they were *silent* signals I could not discern, for at that moment the noisy and unintelligible exclamations

of the motley crew by which I was surrounded, increasing to a general shout,—proclaimed that the huge ferry was set in motion. At the same instant the Slowák rushed to the shore, and attempted to leap upon the receding deck; but the heavily-loaded hod upon his back betrayed him into mis-calculating his forces; and when I looked again, the poor wretch was struggling in the river, and clinging to the treacherous edges of the ice; which mouldered away under his grasp, and again plunged him into the freezing water.

Distressing as it was to behold the life of a fellow-creature exposed to such imminent peril, my feelings were still more strongly interested by the sufferings of a poor woman close by my side. She had thrown herself upon her knees at the moment of the accident, and in a tone uniting the acuteness of agony with the fervency of invocation, she began to vociferate her prayers for the rescue of the drowning man. St. Stephan,—the patron of Hungary,—St Johannes Eleemosynarius,—the peculiar protector of Pres-

burg,— St. Elizabeth and St. Gudula, her own especial guardians,—all these and more, the shrieking woman invoked and threatened and cajoled by turns. But while her hands were uplifted in supplication, she did not dare to raise her head from between her knees; she lacked the courage to assure herself with her own eyes of the plight of the subject of her prayers; and it was remarkable that in the utmost vehemence of her grief, she never once named him except as "*the boy*—the unhappy *boy*—oh! deign, holiest Maria! to rescue *the boy!*"

The young Slowák was indeed so circumstanced as to put the power and the placability of the hierarchy to the test. He was so benumbed by the freezing atmosphere, so oppressed by the icy waters,— and above all so encumbered by his load, that his hands were unable to grasp the poles extended to him by the anxious spectators on the bank above. Once more he was borne down into the eddying stream, and the shriek of the crowd was more than echoed by that of my wretched neighbour who heard, in their exclama-

tion, the sufferer's sentence of death. "Fix the polehooks in his clothes," shouted one of my companions, as the body rose once more to the surface, "he is insensible and cannot seize them;" and this timely counsel was the means of rescuing the perishing Slowák, whom I had the satisfaction of seeing deposited on the bank; dripping—half-frozen—and senseless it is true,—but *alive.*

My first desire was to render the agonized woman beside me aware of his safety; but the poor creature was impenetrable. Her own passionate prayers and the loud jarring of the ice against the sides of the vessel, rendered my voice inaudible. Is was not a moment to stand upon form, so striking her a smart blow upon the shoulder, I shouted in her ears, "The *boy* is safe,—*the boy* is on shore."

"*Hálá istennek!* God be thanked!" she exclaimed, and starting upon her feet, she instantly assured herself of the welcome fact, and began to congratulate herself and him, as audibly as she had before testified her alarm.

Satisfied of the safety of one party and of the contentment of the other, I now turned my attention towards our own most unpleasant position. The ferry had been stopped midway on the Danube by the assemblage of icebergs; and neither the current of the stream, nor that caused by the huge paddles of our vessel, availed to disperse them. Encompassed by the gathering masses,—there we lay,—in the middle of the obstructed river;—the piercing wind blowing bitterly upon us, and sharpening every visage into the expression of a double portion of apprehension and dismay! The market women grumbled and scolded at the loss of their time;—the pontoneer at the helm threatened them in turn with a more serious loss, unless they held their peace. The horses began to get fidgety, and their masters to utter a few "*hundert tausend sacramenten!*" in order to keep them steady. The helmsman appeared discomfited, and a nautical council was held, in which the cowherds in their sheepskin mantles were permitted to opine; and things looked as black and ominous as might well be.

Having myself no voice in the Diet, I exerted mine to inquire of my agitated old woman the source of her tribulation; for her anxiety manifestly outlasted the dangers of its object. She looked cautiously around her, and replied that nothing ailed her, and that it was no matter why she grieved. But when the rabble rout had assembled round our Columbus and his council, leaving us alone together, she leaned halfway into the carriage and muttered, "the boy is in danger, —he is perhaps already taken;—you are younger, *gnädige Frau*, and can see more clearly, — do you still perceive him?"

"I see him distinctly," I replied, "and in perfect safety. He is seated on a log, surrounded by women who are drying his clothes, and at some distance from the landing place. But what is the nature of the danger you mention;— by whom should he be taken,— what crime has he committed? Is *the boy* a deserter?"

"A deserter — *he?* No, lady! no."—

"But you are surely not his mother,— you appear a native Hungarian, and *the boy* is a Slowák."

"A Slowák,—*he?* No, lady—no!" And the old woman drew herself up with an air of pride and self-sufficiency peculiar to the Hungarians, as she announced *the boy* to be her son,—and an Hungarian.

"I would willingly serve you," said I, looking towards the passengers who were about to return, "but even if we are speedily extricated from our present dangers and difficulties, I know not how I can be useful to you. Will money advance his safety?" And I drew out my purse; when the old woman motioning a negative, leaned still closer towards me, and with great rapidity uttered a long history of her family affairs; from which I collected that *the boy*, her younger son, had been employed as an expert vintager on the estates of the Baron Zachy, near Oedenburg, on the lake of Neusidl. He had been harassed, she said, and persecuted by a tyrannical overseer of the Baron's;—"a vile Austrian," she called him, with a shrug of contempt, and repeated the Hungarian adage, "*né met ember, nem ember,*" (a German man is not a man). *The boy* had

apparently inherited her antipathy, for by her account he had quarrelled with the intendant, and at length, having a pruning knife in his hand, had wounded him desperately in the heat of the contest.

"But not *mortally?*" I exclaimed.

"The *Schwab* died on the following day," continued the woman, without noticing my expression of horror. "But as my son is noble, he cannot be arrested until he hath been tried and convicted. The cause is even now before the County Tribunal, which unfortunately chanced to be sitting at the time. His sentence is by this time pronounced, and cannot fail to be a severe one. But he had time to warn his brother and his old mother of his jeopardy,—and if we can get him across the river in safety, he will away to the *Krapaks,* and defy his enemies. I have waited three long days,—I have watched three weary nights by the shore, for my poor Wladislaf," continued the old woman, "and yonder he stands at last,—and the avengers may be behind him,—and all my care may not avail to save him!"

I trembled as I listened to this hurried narration; for I remembered how rashly I had pledged myself to assist the escape of a murderer from justice; and as our unwieldy vessel was once more set in motion, I not only regretted that the expression of my compassion had been so precipitate, but almost wished that a longer imprisonment upon the Danube had retarded my powers of action. Again, however, the masses of ice grated hoarsely against the ferry, and with much delay and much difficulty at last we reached the opposite shore.

The vehicles nearest the strand were necessarily the first to be disembarked; and my own being unfortunately the last, I was fain to remain quiet, and listen patiently to the loquacity of my neighbour. "Look! *gnädige Frau*," said she pointing to a sledge which stood on the shore, drawn by six handsome oxen, and laden with a few pieces of timber. "Look!—yonder sledge is waiting for me and the boy. It belongs to my eldest,—my excellent son; who would risk his very life to save that of Wladislaf; for well

knows he that the boy is the darling of his mother's age."

I looked towards the sledge, and observed beside it a fine young man in the national costume, with his pelisse slung gracefully from his shoulder, and a profusion of long brown curls escaping from beneath his rich fur cap. His appearance was highly picturesque.

"He has a fine figure," I observed, "and an expressive countenance."

"Not half so fine as that of the boy. Oh! lady, could you see my Wladislaf disengaged from those degrading Slowák rags, you would perceive his superiority!—my poor boy—my brave boy! and the doating old woman began once more to weep and to bewail herself, till the disembarkation of the remainder of the crew put an end to our conversation.

She parted from me with the usual Hungarian farewell, "*Isten hozzád! mindet jót kévánok!*" and saluting her in turn with my hands, I drove towards the hotel; and secretly determined to return by another road and watch the next arrival of the ferry.

The excitement of reaching a strange city, of noting the novelties of an unknown nation, did not deter me from fulfilling my project; and in half an hour I crept down to the beach, and took my station upon the stone platform of the Königsberg,—that celebrated hill which the kings of Hungary are compelled to mount on horseback after their coronation, waving their sword towards the four points of the horizon, in token of their determination to defend every quarter of the kingdom against its enemies. The Hungarians are extremely tenacious of all such ancient national ceremonies, and Maria Theresa herself, whom they always designated as *Rex Hungariæ*, was obliged to go through the kingly ceremonial of riding up the Königsberg.

Their Constitution refuses to recognize any king previous to his actual coronation, which must follow, within six months, his accession to the throne; and the importance they attach to the very crown itself, as an hereditary relic of St. Stephen, their first Christian monarch, is almost incredible. A national revolt was nearly

excited by its removal to Vienna under Joseph the Second; nor did any of his arbitrary edicts more nearly touch the pride, and rouse the indignation of his Hungarian subjects. But two days previous to the death of the Emperor, he found himself compelled to re-commit this sacred treasure to their keeping; and in its progress towards Buda it was not only received with triumphant processions in every city, but during the night it was deposited on a high altar, guarded with drawn swords by the magnats and attended by their ladies in court habits of the national costume;—the several churches in which it rested being brilliantly illuminated to do it honour. Even now the casket in which it is contained, and which is deposited in the palace of the Palatine in the fortress of Buda, is secured by three padlocks; the key of only one of them is consigned to the care of the reigning emperor, who, among the articles of his coronation oath, swears that no profane eye shall be admitted to look upon so thrice holy a relic as the Hungarian crown!

I am straying however from the Königsberg; and must return to the platform, upon whose stone balustrade I leaned to watch the arrival of the ferry. Stationed close beneath me, I soon perceived the woman and the sledge. Her son,—the eldest,—the most deserving,—but not the best beloved,—was near at hand. He was in truth a noble looking creature; and I observed that he was intent to cheer and comfort the heart of his partial parent, while his equally anxious eyes were bent upon the approaching ferry boat.

It touched the strand; and foremost among the passengers to leap on shore, was the disguised culprit—the fugitive—*the murderer!* He immediately approached the spot on which his eyes had been fixed during the whole passage; and a look of joyful intelligence between the three was evident to myself, who had been previously initiated into the mystery. But to a common observer their reception of the seeming Slowák was only such as might have been granted to a servant who had outstaid his appointed time.

The mother rated him in good set terms, while tears of gladness stood in her eyes; and the brother bade him take his place on the sledge and drive on, without further delay,—though his own lips quivered as he spoke with joyful emotion.

Without further loss of time so precious, the Slowák took the whip in his hands and obeyed the peremptory commands poured upon him; while the other two quickly seated themselves in the vehicle.

They were soon out of sight; but the old woman who had noticed my arrival, stood up in the sledge as it turned towards the suburb, placed her hand upon her bosom, and having pointed to her two children, sate down again as if her heart were too full to complete her salutation to the "*gnädige Frau*" who had sympathised in her distress.

Weeks and months passed away, and among other scenes and other interests, I had almost forgotten my hero of the Presburg ferry, and his far more interesting family. Chancing however

to hear the name of his *Seigneur* mentioned in society at Pesth, I inquired into the circumstances of the murder at Oedenburg, without alluding to my peculiar interest in the affair. The crime of murder is so horribly prevalent in the Hungarian states, and is so lightly held by the laws of the country, that I was astonished to find it had, in the instance in question, received its fitting punishment. Baron Zachy, resolved to make a momentous example upon his lands, had pursued the fugitive criminal with unrelenting severity. "He was seized after a desperate resistance among the Carpathian mountains," added my informant.

"And he is now in prison?" I inquired with considerable interest.

"No! he is hanging near the walls of Munkatsch. There are three bodies on the gallows, and his is the third."

The voice of the mother exclaiming "my boy—my boy!" recurred to my remembrance; and the fine manly face of the young Hungarian,

labouring to suppress his tears, rose before my eyes; — I wish I could even now dismiss the painful images my mind acquired during my passage of *the ferry of the Danube.*

END OF VOL. II.

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